GRIMM'S FAIRY TALES

Children's Classic Collections

Illustrated by Rie Cramer

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Illustrations by Rie Cramer
and Goldy Young

FOR
YOUNG
READERS

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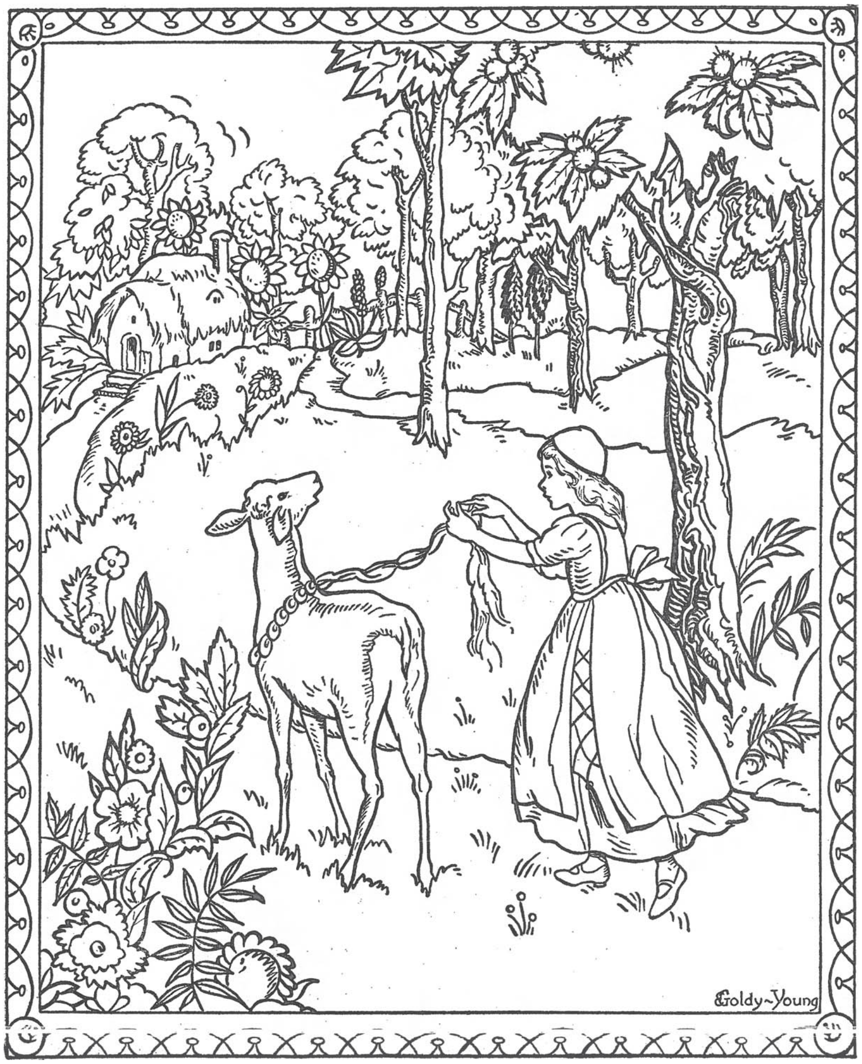

Goldy-Young

Grethel and the Fawn Came to a Cottage in the Wood

HANSEL AND GRETHEL

NEAR a large wood a poor woodcutter once lived with his wife and two children. The little boy was called Hansel, and the little girl was called Grethel. They rarely had nice things to eat, and when there was a famine in the land they could not get so much as their daily bread. As he lay in bed at night the father was greatly troubled; he sighed and groaned and said to his wife:

"What is to become of us? How are we to feed our little ones when we haven't anything ourselves?"

"We can't feed them, husband," answered the woman, "so tomorrow morning early we will lead the children far into the wood, light them a fire, give each a bit of bread, and then go to our work and leave them alone. They will never find their way home, and we shall be rid of them."

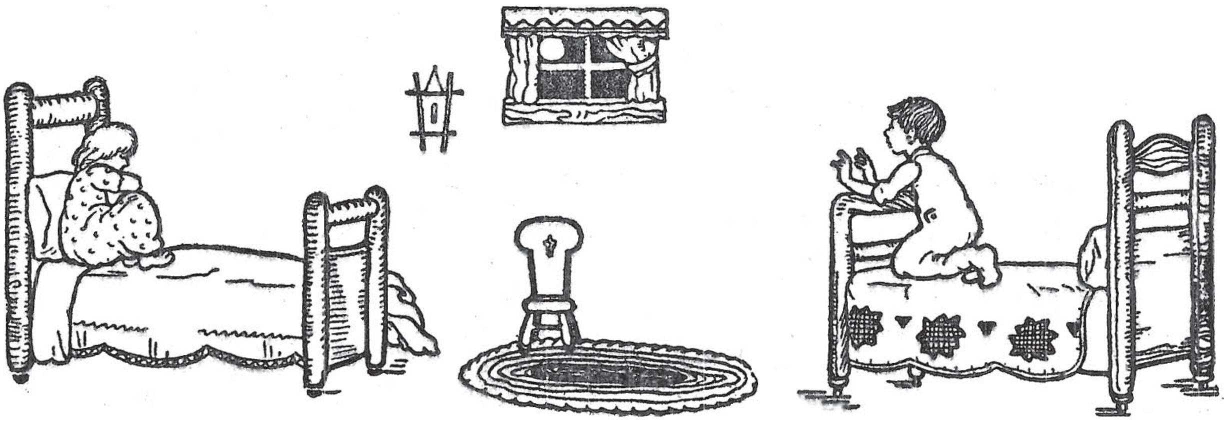
“No, wife,” said the man, “I cannot do that. How could anyone have the heart to leave two dear children alone in the wood to be devoured by wild beasts?”

“Oh!” said she, “then we must all four die of hunger.” She continued to persuade him, and at last he half consented.

The two children were so hungry that they had not been able to go to sleep, and they overheard what their stepmother proposed to do with them. Grethel wept bitter tears and said to Hansel, “They don’t love us.”

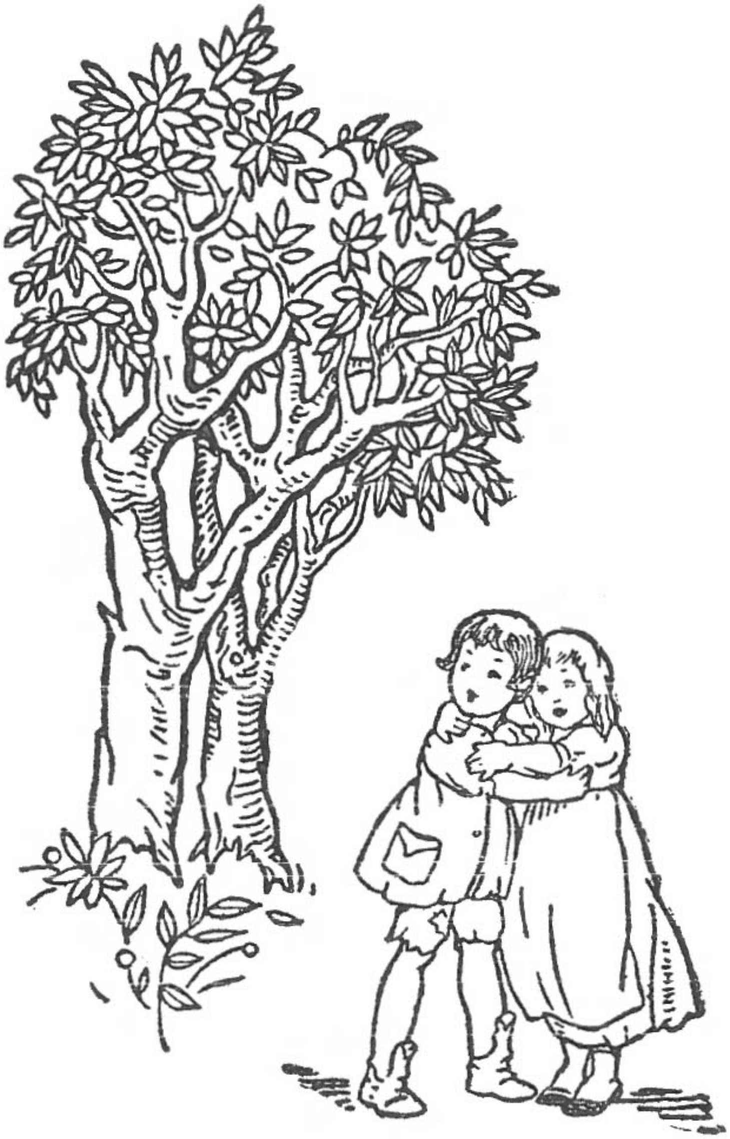
“Don’t cry, Grethel,” said Hansel, “I will see that we are not lost.”

When the old couple had fallen asleep, he put on his little coat, crept down the stairs and let himself out at the back door. The moon was shining brightly, and the white pebbles on the path in front of the house shone like new coins. Hansel stopped and stuffed his coat pockets full of pebbles. Then he went back and said to Grethel, “Dry your tears, little sister, and go to sleep. God will not forsake us.” Then he lay down on his little bed.



When day dawned the woman called the two children and told them to dress before the sun was high. “Get up, both of you,” she said, “and come into the wood and pick up sticks.” Then she gave each a piece of bread, and told them to keep it for dinner and not eat it sooner, as they would get nothing else. Grethel put the bread under her apron, because Hansel’s pockets were full of pebbles.

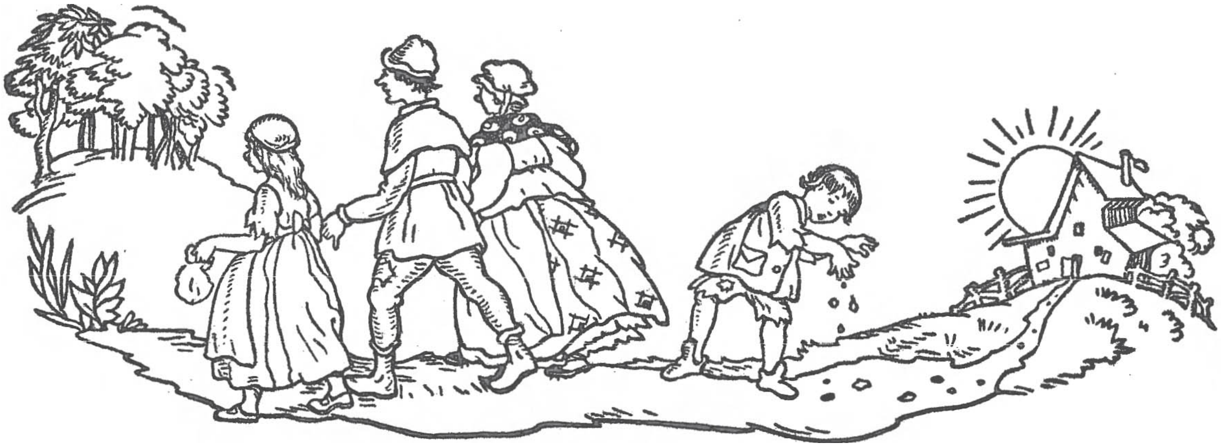
Soon afterward, they all started for the wood. They had not gone far before Hansel stood still and looked back at the house. He did this again and again, till his father said, “Hansel, what are you staring at?”



“Oh, father,” said Hansel, “I am looking at my white kitten, which is sitting on the roof waving good-bye to me.”

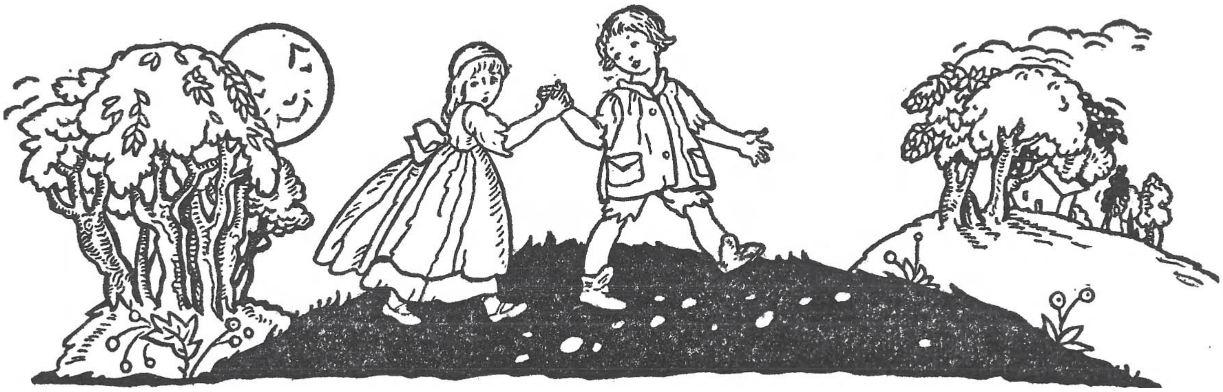
“That isn’t your kitten, silly child,” said the woman, “it’s the morning sunlight shining on the chimney.” But Hansel had not been really looking at the kitten; he was dropping behind him the pebbles out of his pocket.

When they came to the middle of the wood the father said, “Now, children, pick up sticks, and we will make a fire.”



Hansel and Grethel built up a large pile of twigs, and when the fire was lighted and the flames were rising high, the woman said, “You can lie down by the fire and rest yourselves while we go farther to cut wood. When we have finished we will come and get you.”

Hansel and Grethel sat by the fire, and when dinnertime came they ate their bread. Because they heard the blows of the ax they thought their father was not far off. But it was not the ax they heard. It was a branch which he had tied to a rotten tree so that the wind blew it up and down. And they sat such a long time that they grew tired and closed their eyes and went to sleep. They did not wake till it was night, and pitch dark.

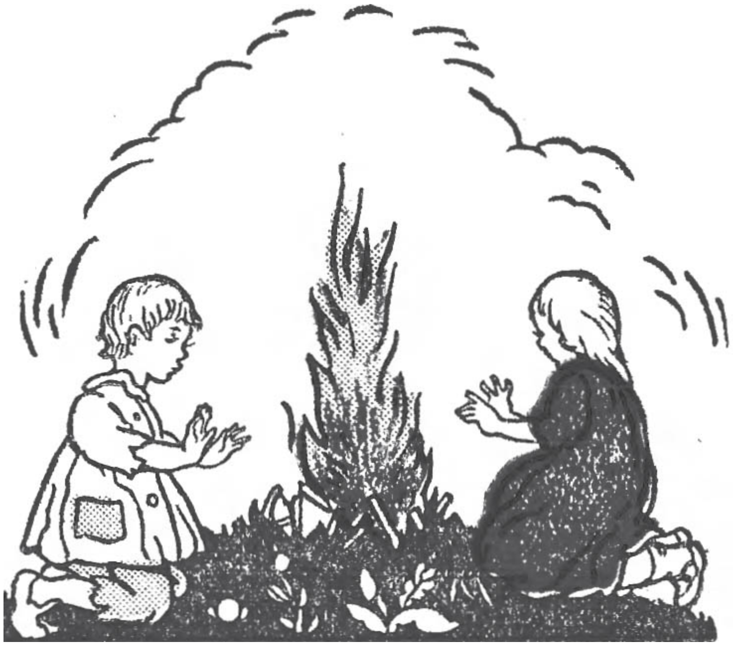


Grethel began to cry, and said, “We shall never find our way out of the wood.”

“Wait,” said Hansel; “the moon will be up in a minute, and then we’ll find our way fast enough.”

Soon the great full moon rose in the sky, and Hansel took his little sister’s hand and followed the track of the pebbles, which shone like silver coins and showed them the way. They walked the whole night, and at break of day reached their father’s house. They knocked at the door, and when the woman opened it and saw Hansel and Grethel she said, “Why did you sleep so long in the wood? We began to think you were not coming back at all.”

The father was delighted to see the children, for he had not liked to desert them so cruelly.



Not long afterward there were again hard times, and the children heard their mother saying to their father in the night, “There is hardly anything left to eat, only half a loaf of bread, and when that is gone what are we to do? The children must be done away with. We will take them deeper into the wood this time, so that they will not be able to find their way out. It’s the only thing to be done to save us.”

The man’s heart was heavy, and he thought, “I would rather share our last crust with the children.” But the woman had made up her mind, and all the man said made no difference, and he was obliged to give in the second time.

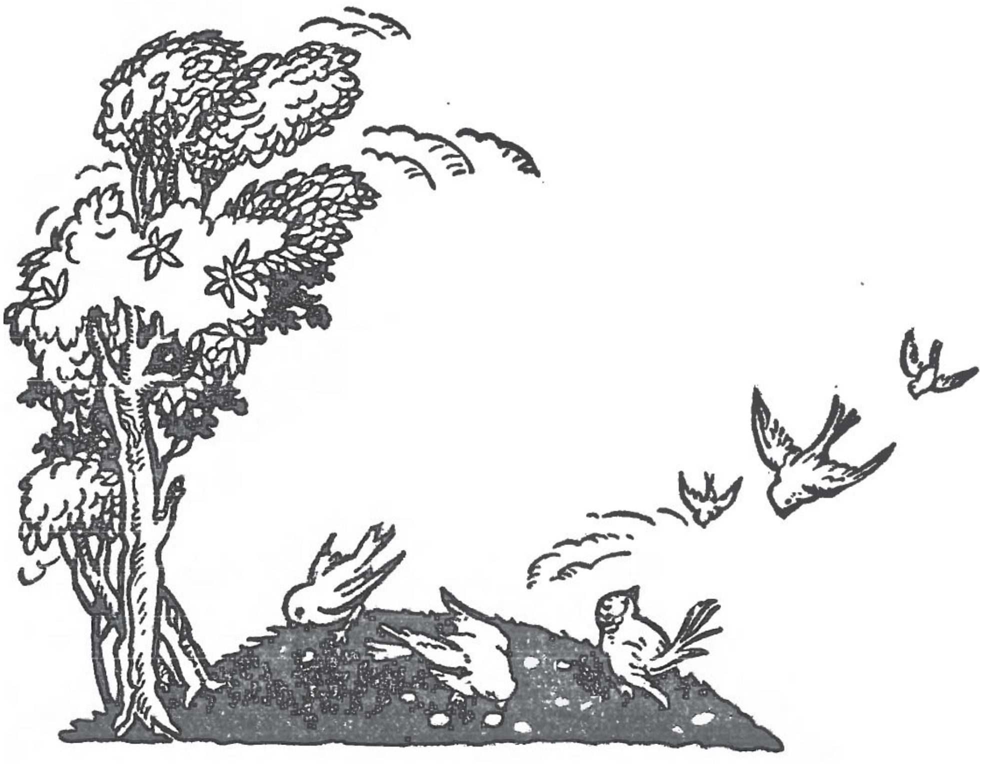
But the children again heard the whole of the conversation. When his parents had gone to sleep, Hansel got up to go out as he had done before and pick up pebbles, but he found that the woman had locked the door. All the same, he comforted his little sister, saying, “Never mind, Grethel, don’t cry, but go to sleep. God will take care of us.”

At dawn the woman came and roused the children. She gave them each a slice of bread, but it was even smaller than the time before. As they walked to the wood, Hansel crumbled the bread in his pocket, stood still now and then, and dropped a crumb on the ground.

“Hansel, why do you hang back and look around?” his father asked.

“I am looking at my little dove, who is sitting on the roof to coo good-bye.”

“Stupid,” cried the woman, “it is not your dove but the morning sun shining on the chimney.” But Hansel went on dropping his crumbs by the way.

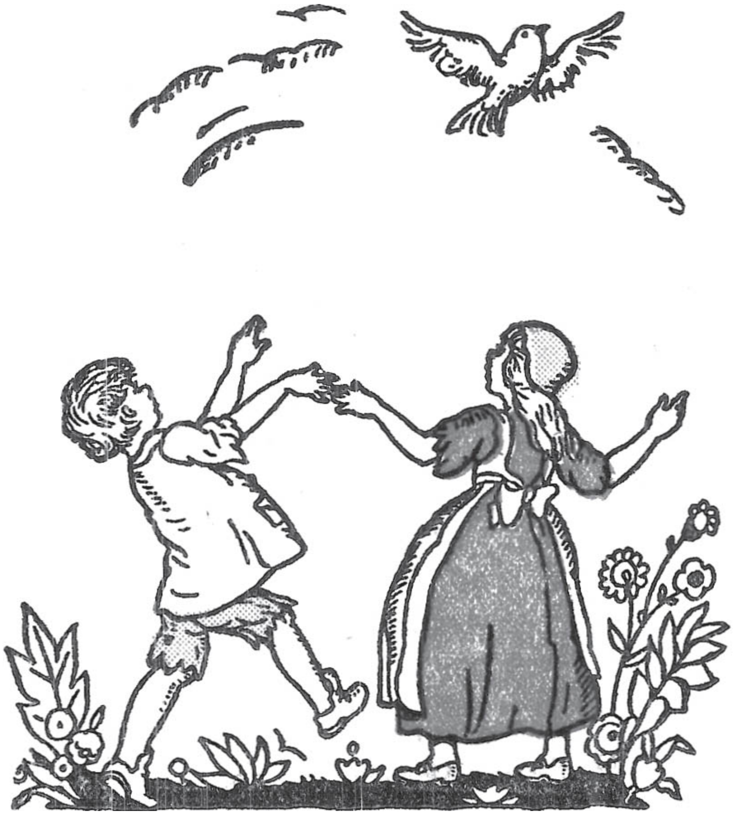


The woman led the children deeper and deeper into the wood, to a part where they never had been before.

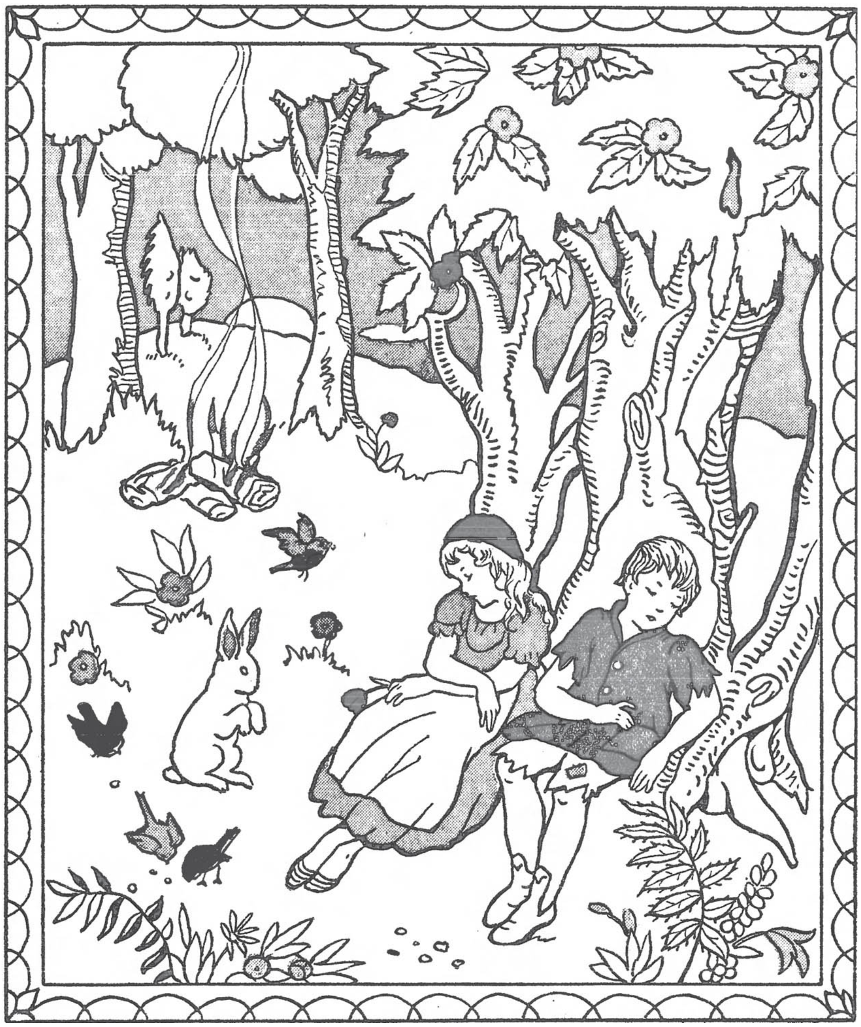
Again a huge fire was kindled, and the stepmother said, “Stay here, children, and when you are tired take a nap. We are going farther to chop wood. When we have finished, we will come for you.”

When dinner-time came Grethel divided her bread with Hansel, because he had scattered his as they came along. Then they sat under the trees listening to the sound of the wind in the branches until it lulled them to sleep. The whole day and evening went by without anyone coming to get them. When they awoke, it was pitch dark.

Grethel was frightened and began to cry, but Hansel comforted his sister by saying, “Wait till the moon is up, then we shall see the bread crumbs I threw on the ground, and they will show us the way home.”



But when the moon rose they could see no crumbs, for the birds had picked up every one.



Hansel and Grethel Fell Asleep in the Wood

Hansel said, “We shall soon find our way, Grethel.”

But they did not find it—though they walked the whole night and the whole of the next day, they were still in the wood and faint from hunger, for they had eaten nothing but a few berries. And now, because they were so tired, they lay down under a tree and fell asleep.

The third morning after they had left their father’s house, they were still deeper in the wood, and quite lost. If help did not come, they knew they would die. Then they saw a beautiful snow-white bird sitting on a branch, and it was singing so beautifully that they stopped to listen. It spread its wings when it had finished its song, and flew in front of them.

They followed it till it perched on the roof of a little house. On coming near, they saw that the house was built of bread thatched with cake, and the windows were made of barley-sugar.

“We will make a good meal for once,” said Hansel. “I’ll have a good slice of the roof, and you, Grethel, shall begin with a piece of the window, which will be sweet.”

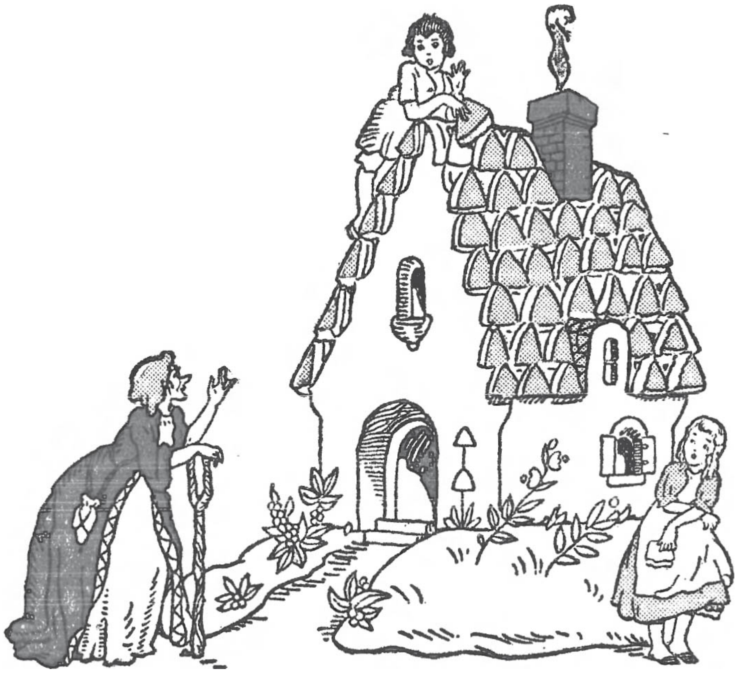
Hansel climbed up and broke off a bit of the roof to see how it tasted, and Grethel stood by a window and nibbled it. Then a voice called from inside:

“Nibble! nibble! nibble! Who’s nibbling at my house?” The children answered, “The wind, the wind,” and ate on, quite unconcerned.

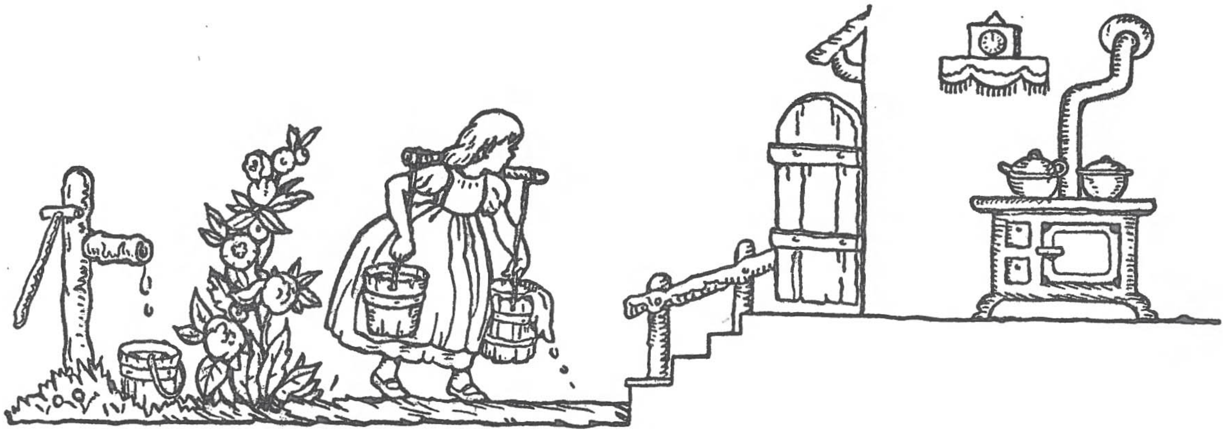
Suddenly the door opened and an old woman, leaning on a crutch, hobbled out. Hansel and Grethel shook in their shoes for fright, letting the good food fall from their hands.

The woman nodded her aged head, and croaked, “Dear children, who brought you here? Come in, do, and stay with me. No harm shall come to you!”

She took them by the hand and led them into the house. There a good dinner stood ready, milk pancakes, with sugar, apples, and nuts. Afterward, two little white beds were uncovered, and Hansel and Grethel lay down in them, and felt as if they were in heaven.



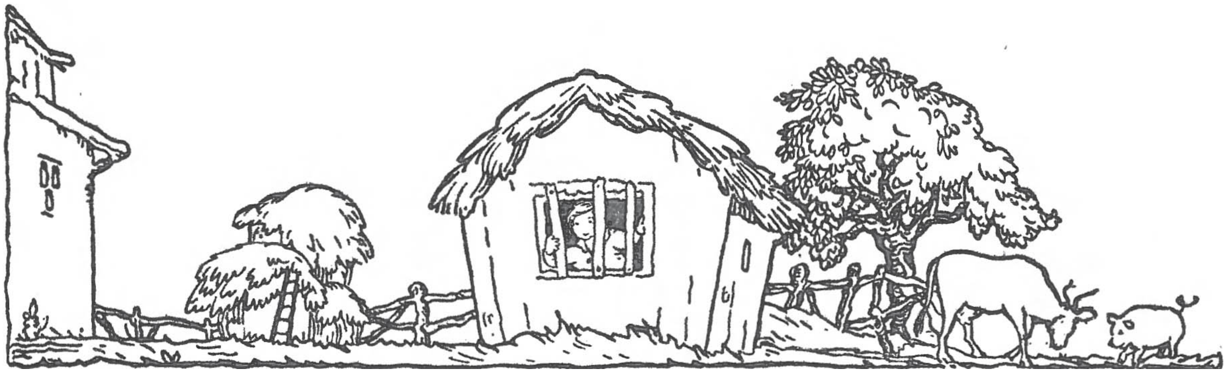
But the old woman was only pretending to be friendly. She was really a wicked old witch, who lay in wait for children, and had her house built of things good to eat in order to lure them into her clutches. When she had them in her power, she cooked and ate them. The witch had pink eyes and could not see far, but she had keen scent, like an animal, and could smell human flesh far away.



Early the next morning, before the children were awake, she got up, and as she saw their round rosy cheeks, she muttered, “There’s a tasty dish.” Then she shook Hansel, and, seizing him with her shriveled hand, carried him to a little stable, where she shut him in behind a grating. He howled as loudly as he could, but it was no use. Next she went to Grethel, shook her, and screamed, “Get up, lazy girl. Go and draw water to cook your brother something good; he is outside in the stable and must be fattened up. When he is fat I shall eat him.”

Grethel began to cry bitterly, but she was forced to do what the wicked witch commanded.

Hansel was now given the most nourishing food, but Grethel got only scraps. Every morning the old witch hobbled to the stable, and cried, “Hansel, put your finger out that I may feel how fat you are getting.”



But Hansel stuck out a bone instead of a finger and the old woman, whose eyes were so poor that she could not see, marveled that he did not grow fat.

When four weeks had passed, and Hansel seemed still thin, she lost patience and declared she would not wait longer.

“Here, Grethel,” she cried, “make haste and draw water—whether Hansel is fat or thin, I will eat him tomorrow!”

The poor little sister wept and lamented as she brought the water, and tears poured down her cheeks. “Dear God, help us!” she prayed. “If the wild beasts had eaten us in the woods, we should at least have died together.”

When the witch had gone, poor Grethel watched her chance and ran to Hansel, telling him what she had heard.

“We must run away quickly, for the old woman is a wicked witch, who will kill us,” she said.

But Hansel said, “I know how to get out, for I have loosened the fastening. But you must first take her fairy wand, that we may save ourselves if she should follow, and bring, too, the pipe that hangs in her room.”

Grethel managed to get both the wand and the pipe, and away the children went.

When the old witch came to see whether her meal was ready, she sprang in a great rage to the window, and, though her eyes were bad, she smelled the children running away.

She quickly put on her boots, which went yards at a step, and had scarcely made two steps with them before she overtook the children. But Grethel had seen that she was coming after them, and, by the help of the magic wand, turned Hansel into a lake of water, and herself into a swan which swam in the middle of it.

The witch sat on the shore and tried to decoy the swan by throwing crumbs of bread to it; but it would not come near her, and she was at last forced to go home without her victims.

Then Grethel, by means of the wand, changed herself and Hansel back to their proper forms, and they journeyed on until dawn of day. The girl then turned herself into a beautiful rose in a hedge, and Hansel sat near by disguised as a piper. Soon the witch came striding along.

“Good piper,” she said, “may I pluck that beautiful rose?”

“Oh, yes,” said he.

She went to the hedge in a hurry to gather the flower—well knowing what it was—and Hansel pulled out his pipe and began to play.

Now the pipe was a fairy pipe, and whoever heard it was obliged to dance, whether wishing to or not. So the old witch was forced to dance a jig, on and on without rest, and could not stop to reach the rose. As Hansel did not stop playing for a moment, the thorns tore the clothes from her body, and pricked her sorely, and at last she stuck quite fast in the hedge.

Then Grethel set herself free once more, and she and Hansel set out for home. After traveling a long way, Grethel grew tired, so they lay down to sleep in a hollow tree that grew in a meadow near the wood. As they slept, the witch—who had at last got out of the prickly bush—came by; and, seeing the wand, which lay on the ground beside the children, grabbed it. At once she turned poor Hansel into a fawn.

When Grethel woke and found what had happened, she wept bitterly over the poor creature. The tears rolled from his eyes, as he lay down beside her.

Grethel said, “Rest in peace, dear fawn; I will never leave you.”

She took off her long golden necklace and put it round his neck, then she plucked some rushes and plaited them into a string, and led her poor fawn by her side wherever she went.

At last one day they came to a little cottage. Grethel, seeing that it was quite empty, said, “We can live here.”

She gathered leaves and moss to make a soft bed for the fawn; and every morning she went out and picked nuts and berries for herself, and shrubs and tender grass for her friend. The fawn ate out of her hand, and played and frolicked about her. In the evening, when Grethel was tired, she laid her head on the fawn and slept, and if only poor Hansel could have had his right form again, they would have led a very happy life.

After they had lived for years in the woods by themselves, until Grethel was a grown maiden, it chanced that the King came one day to hunt there. When the fawn heard the echoing of the horns, the baying of the dogs, and the shouts of the huntsmen, he wanted to see what was going on.

“Oh, sister!” said he, “let me go out into the wood. I can stay no longer.”

Finally Grethel consented. “But,” she said, “be sure to come back in the evening. I shall shut the door to keep out the huntsmen, but if you tap and say, ‘Sister, let me in,’ I shall know you. If you do not speak, I shall keep the door fast.”

Then away sprang the fawn, bounding along in the open air. The King and his huntsmen saw and followed the beautiful creature, but could not overtake him; for just as they thought they were sure of their prize he would spring over the bushes and be out of sight at once.

When it grew dark the fawn came running home to the hut and tapped, saying, “Sister, let me in!” Then Grethel opened the door, and in he jumped, and slept soundly all night on his soft little bed.

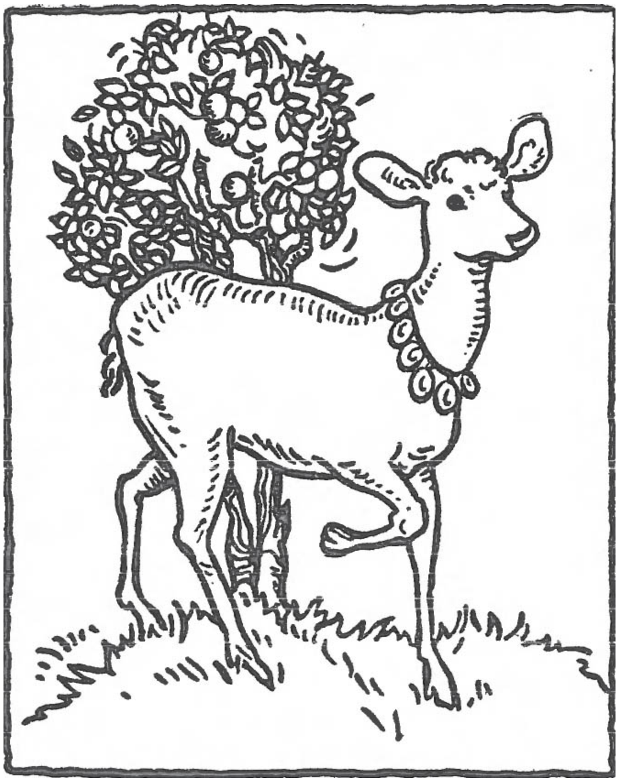
Next morning the hunt went on; and when he heard the huntsmen’s horns, the fawn said, “Sister, open the door for me. I must go.”

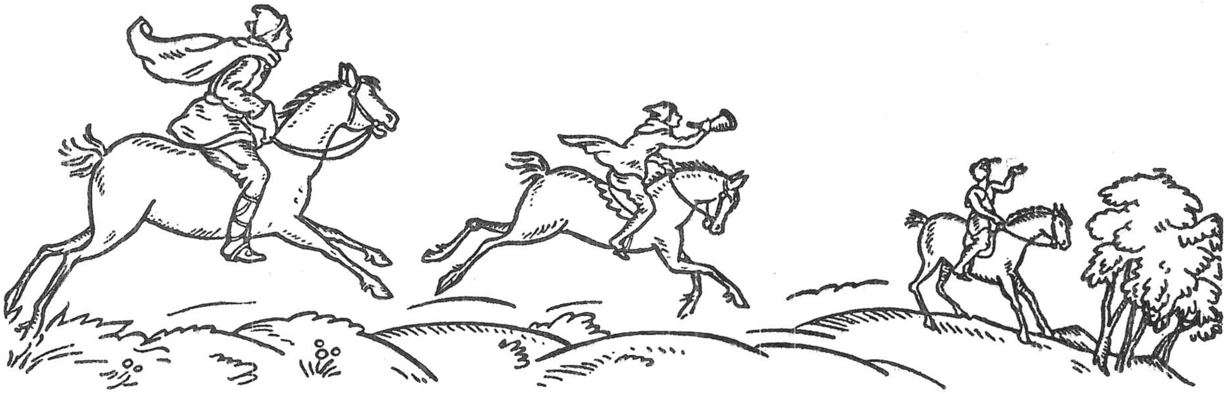
When the King and the huntsmen saw the fawn, they again gave chase. The chase lasted the whole day, but at last the huntsmen surrounded him, and one wounded him in the foot, so that he became lame and could hardly crawl home.

The man who had wounded him followed behind and heard the little fawn say, “Sister, let me in.” He saw the door open and shut again. The huntsman went to the King and told him what he had seen and heard.

The King said, “Tomorrow we will have another chase.”

Grethel was very frightened when she saw that her dear fawn was wounded, and after washing the blood away she put some healing herbs on the place. In the morning there was nothing to be seen of the wound, and when the horn blew, the little thing said, “I cannot stay here, I must go and look on. I will take care they don’t catch me.”





But Grethel said, “I am sure they will kill you this time. I will not let you go.”

“I shall die of grief,” said he, “if you keep me here.” Then Grethel was forced to let him go. She opened the door with a heavy heart, and he bounded gaily into the wood.

When the King saw the fawn, he cried to his men, “Chase him all day long till you catch him; do not let him out of your sight, but let no one do him harm.”

At sunset, however, they had not been able to overtake him, and the King called the huntsmen, saying to the one who had watched, “Now show me the little hut.”

So they went to the door and tapped, and the King said, “Sister, let me in.”

The door was opened, and the King went in, and there stood a maiden more lovely than any he had ever seen.

Grethel was very frightened when she saw that it was not the fawn, but a King with a golden crown who had entered her hut, but he spoke kindly and took her hand, and after they had talked awhile, he said, “Will you come with me to my castle and be my wife?”

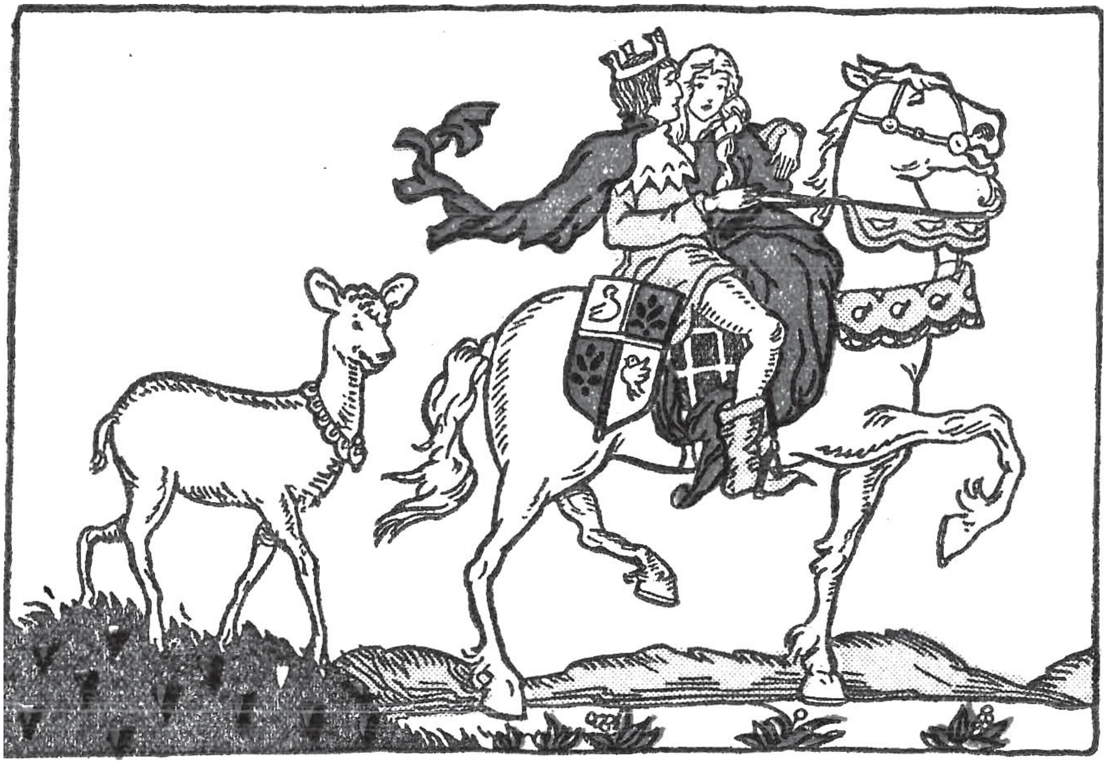
“Yes,” said Grethel, “I will go to your castle, but I cannot be your wife; and my fawn must go with me, for I cannot part with him.”

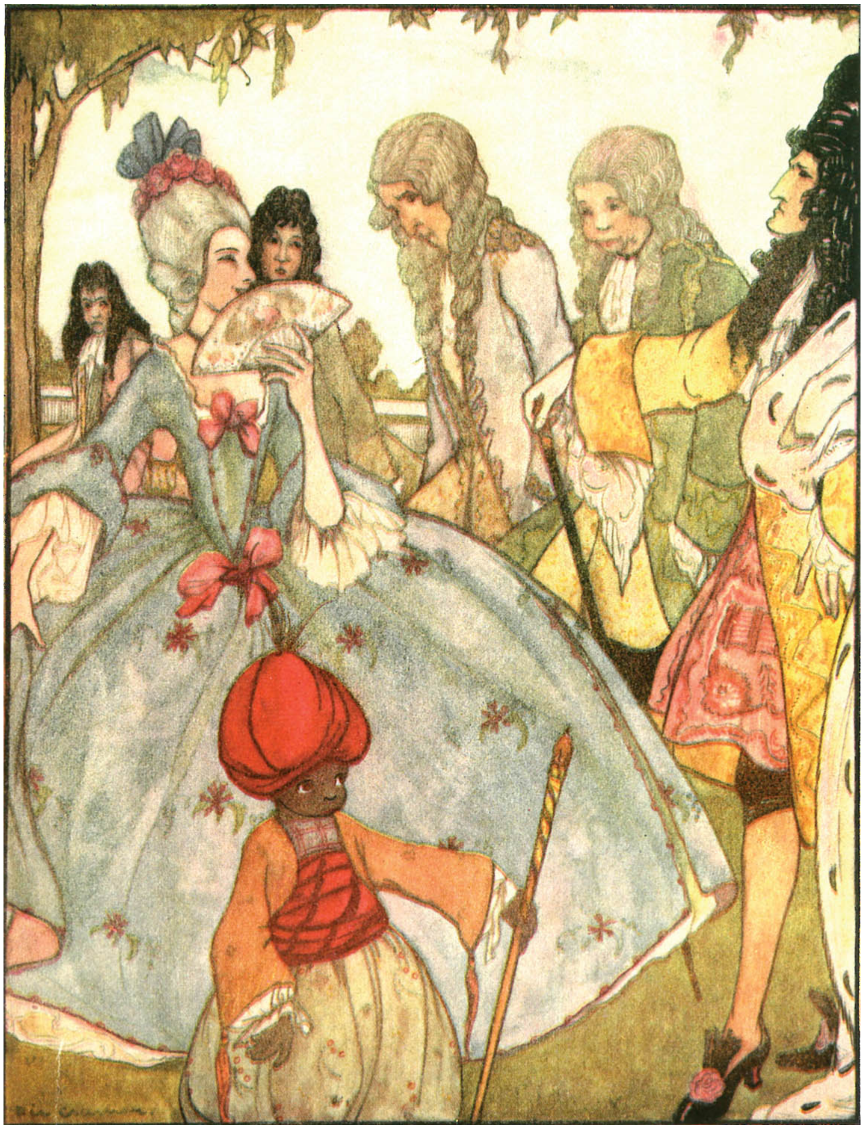
“Well,” said the King, “he shall come and live with you all your life, and shall want for nothing.”

Just then in sprang the little fawn, and Grethel tied the string to his neck, and they left the hut together.

Then the King lifted Grethel on to his prancing horse and they rode to his palace, the fawn running behind them. On the way Grethel told the King her story. He knew the old witch and her wicked ways and sent for her, commanding her sternly to change the fawn into human form again.

When she saw her dear brother restored, Grethel was so grateful to the King that she at once consented to marry him. They lived happily all their days, and Hansel became the King’s chief advisor.





“WELL,” SHE LAUGHED, “HE HAS A CHIN LIKE A THRUSH’S BEAK”

KING THROSTLE-BEARD

A KING had a daughter who was beautiful beyond description, but so haughty and disagreeable that no suitor was good enough for her. She not only sent away one suitor after another, but also poked fun at them.

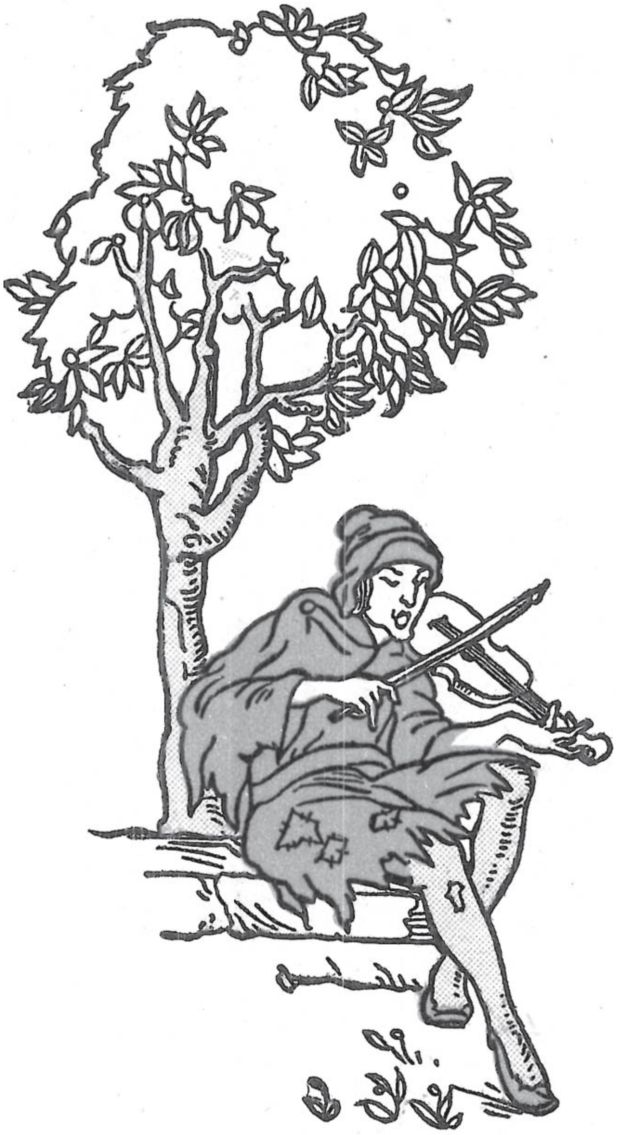
Once the King gave a great feast, and invited all the marriageable bachelors to come to it from far and near. They were all arranged in a line according to their rank. First came the kings, then the princes, dukes, counts, and barons, and, last of all, the pages. The King's daughter moved down the line, but to every one she had some objection to make. This one was too fat—"Beer-barrel," she ejaculated scornfully; that one too tall and thin—"Daddy-long-legs," was her comment on him. Another was too short—"short and stout and awkward," she said. The fourth was too pale—"a death's head"; a fifth too red—"a turkey-cock." The sixth was not upright enough—"like a piece of bent wood," and so on.

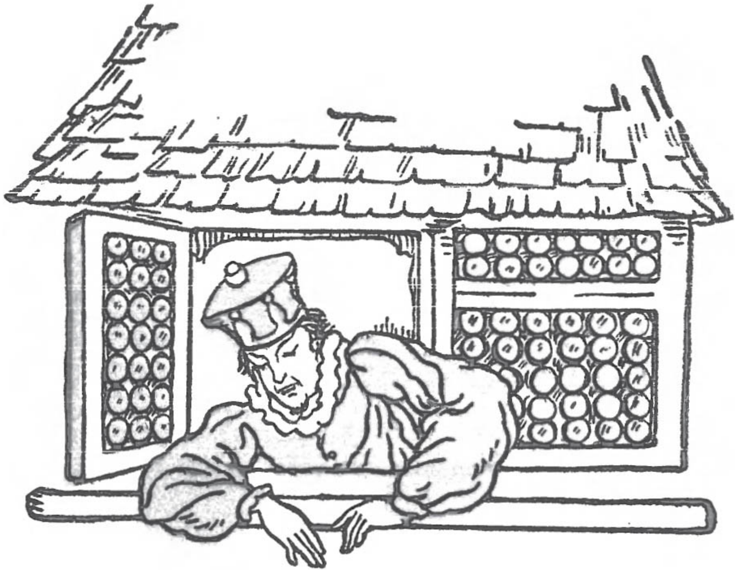
But the one she made especially merry over was a king with a crooked chin. "Good gracious!" she exclaimed, laughing, "the fellow has a chin like a throstle's beak." And from that day the king was given the name of Throstle-beard. The old King grew very angry when he saw that his daughter did nothing but make fun of people, and that she despised all her suitors, and he swore she should marry the first beggar who came to his gates.

A few days later a wandering musician began to sing for alms under the window. The King heard him and ordered the man to be brought in. The musician came in his dirty, ragged clothes, sang before the King and then asked for some small reward.

The King said, “Your song has pleased me so much that I will give you my daughter’s hand in marriage.”

The Princess shuddered, but the King went on, “I made a vow that I would give her to the first beggar-man who came this way, and I will hold to my vow.”





It was no good to resist. The clergyman was sent for and the Princess was united to the wandering musician.

After the marriage the King said, “Now you are a beggar’s wife; it is no longer proper for you to stay in the castle. You and your husband must go away at once.”

The beggar led her out by the hand, and she was obliged to accompany him on foot. They came to a great wood, and the Princess asked, “To whom does this wood belong, I wonder?”

The musician replied:

“It belongs to the good King Throstle-beard;
Hadst thou taken him it would be thine.”

And she answered:

“I, a poor maiden gently reared,
Ah, would I had taken King Throstle-beard.”

Then they came to a meadow and she asked again, “To whom does this pretty green meadow belong?”

“It belongs to the good King Throstle-beard;
Hadst thou taken him it would be thine.”

And again she sighed:

“I, a poor maiden gently reared,
Ah, would I had taken King Throstle-beard.”

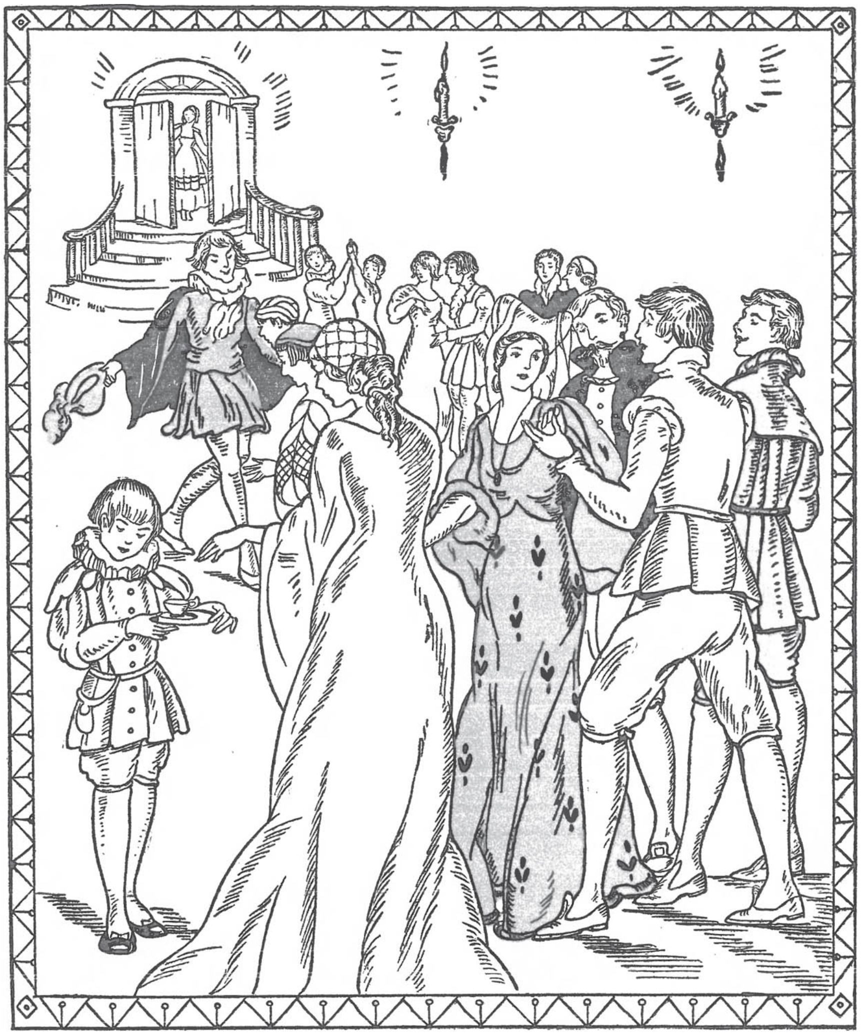
Then they came to a big town, and again she asked, “To whom does this beautiful town belong?”

“It belongs to the good King Throstle-beard;
Hadst thou taken him it would be thine.”

To which she replied:

“I, a poor maiden gently reared,
Ah, would I had taken King Throstle-beard.”

“I do not like,” said the musician, “your constantly wishing for another husband. Am I not good enough?”



The Poor Maiden Peeped Through the Doorway at the Gay Throng

At last they reached a very small house, and she exclaimed:

“The smallest house I did ever see,
Whose, pray, may this hovel be?”

The musician answered, “It is my house and yours, where we are going to live together.”

“Where are the servants?” asked the Princess.

“What servants?” answered the beggar, “You’ll have to do everything for yourself. Get to work now; light the fire, put the water on to boil, and then cook my supper. I am very tired.”

But the Princess knew nothing about making fires and cooking meals, and the beggar-man was obliged to lend a helping hand, or nothing would have been done.

For a few days they lived in this fashion, using up all their provisions, and then the man said, “Look here, this can’t go on. We are eating a lot and earning nothing. You shall weave baskets.”

He went out, cut some rushes, and brought them home; his wife began to weave, but the rough rushes tore her delicate hands.

“I see,” he said, “that won’t do. You shall spin instead; perhaps you will be able to spin better than you can weave.”

She sat down and attempted to spin, but the hard threads cut her soft fingers, and the blood poured from them.

“You see,” he said, “how it is. You are no good for any work, and I have made a bad bargain in marrying you. Now I must try and start a trade in pots and pans and earthenware articles. You must sit in the market and sell them.”

“Oh dear,” thought she; “suppose any one from my father’s kingdom should come to the market and see me!”

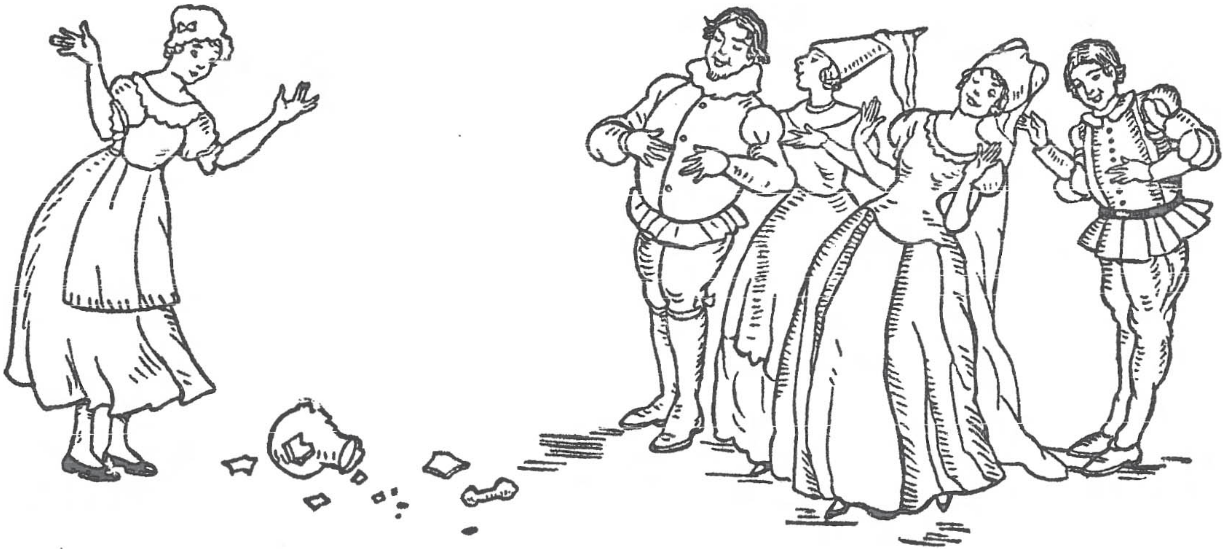
But there was no help for it; the only alternative was to die of hunger. The first time she did well, for people bought things from her because she was pretty, and willingly paid the price she asked.

The two lived on her earnings as long as they lasted, and then the man bought another lot of earthenware and crockery. She sat in a corner of the market-place, arranged her wares, and offered them for sale. Then suddenly a drunken soldier, whose horse was running away, rode into her stall, and smashed all the pots to bits. She began to cry and was in despair as to what she should do. “Oh dear, what will become of me?” she moaned. “What will my husband say?” And she ran home and told him about it.

“Tears are not fitting in the eyes of a vendor of earthenware,” said her husband. “You are not suited to any proper work. I have been, therefore, to the palace of our king, and asked if you could not be employed there as kitchen-maid. They have promised to give you a trial, and you will get your board for nothing.”

So the Princess became a kitchen-maid. She had to drudge for the cook, and do the dirtiest work. She kept, in a pocket under her dress, a jar with a stopper, in which she took home scraps, and on these she lived.

It happened that the King’s eldest son was to give a ball in honor of his coming of age. On the great night the poor young woman went upstairs to look on from behind the doors of the ballroom. She almost wept at the dazzling splendor of everything, and thought with sorrow of her own wretched fate. She repented bitterly her haughty and discourteous behavior, which had plunged her into such poverty. From the costly dishes which were carried to and fro, the delicious smell of which made her mouth water, the waiters now and then threw her a few scraps, and these she put in her jar, with the intention of taking them home.



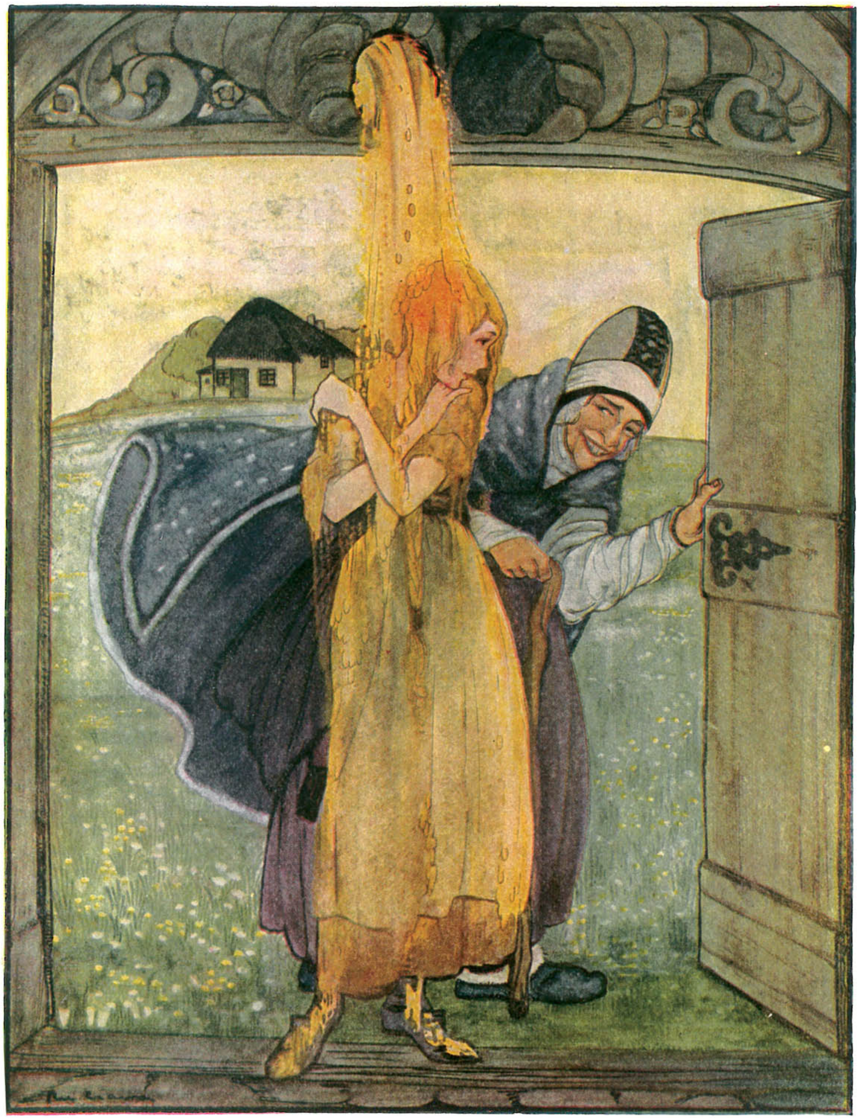
When the King’s eldest son walked into the salon, arrayed in velvet and silk, with jewels and a gold chain round his neck, he saw the poor woman peeping from behind the door, and took hold of her hand and asked her to dance with him. But she refused, trembling, for she recognized King Throstle-beard. But in spite of her struggles, he insisted on drawing her into the hall, when the string that closed the pocket under her dress gave way. Her jar rolled out and the soup and scraps fell all over the floor. The people laughed, and she rushed to the door, longing to escape, but on the staircase a man stopped her and brought her back, and when she looked at him he, too, had the face of King Throstle-beard. In a kind voice he said to her:

“Don’t be afraid. I and the fiddler with whom you lived in the wretched hovel are one and the same person. I disguised myself for love of you. I, too, was the drunken soldier who rode into your stall and knocked over your pots. These things have happened to break your haughty spirit, and to punish you for your pride.”

She wept and sobbed bitterly. “I was very wrong,” she said, “and I am not worthy to be your wife.”

He comforted her. “The past is over,” he said. “Now we will celebrate our wedding feast in earnest.”

At this ladies-in-waiting came and arrayed her in splendid clothes, and her father and his whole court came and wished her joy on her marriage to King Throstle-beard.

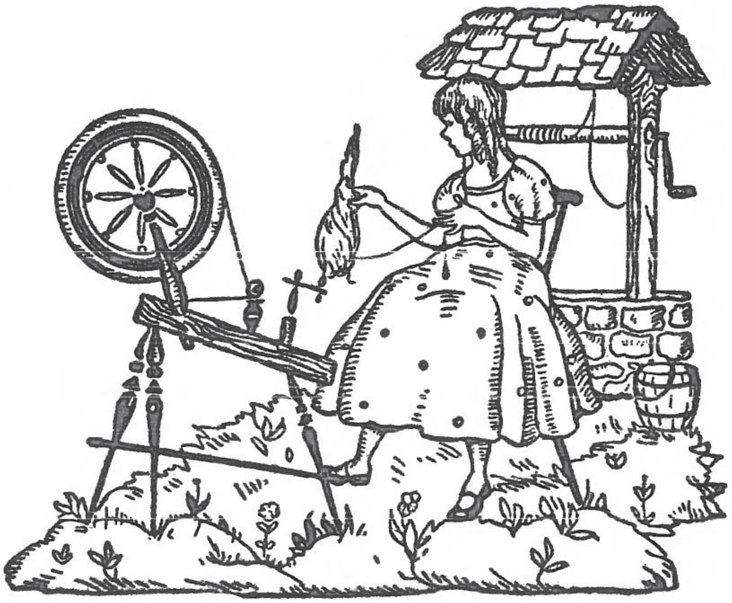


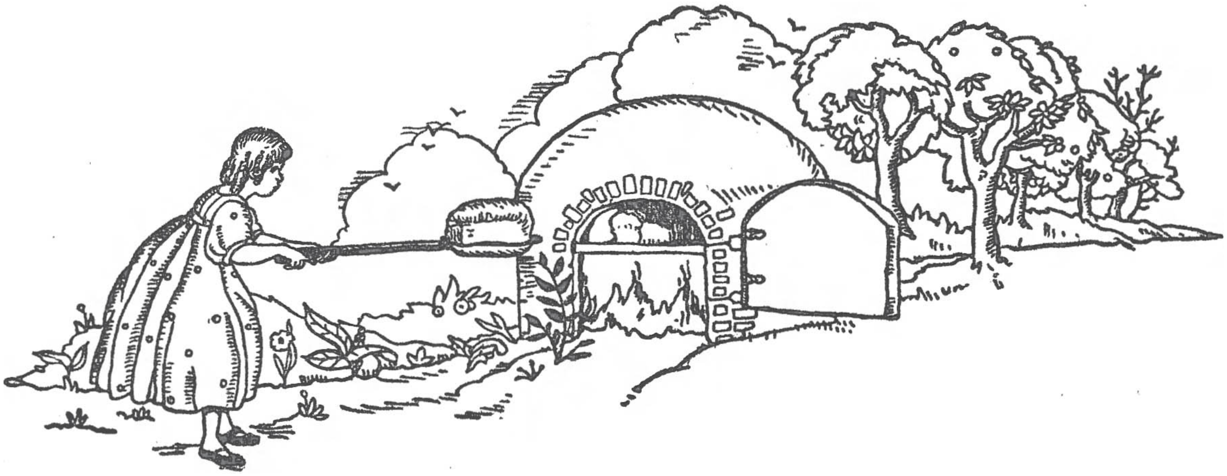
A HEAVY SHOWER OF GOLD-RAIN FELL

MOTHER HOLLE

A WIDOW had two daughters, one of whom was pretty and industrious, the other ugly and lazy. She had, however, a much greater affection for the ugly and lazy daughter, because she was her own daughter; the other had to do all the work, and was the Cinderella of the household. The poor girl was obliged to go out on the high-road every day and sit by a well and spin till her fingers bled.

Now it happened once that the spindle became blood-stained, and when she went to the well to wash it, the spindle dropped out of her hands and fell in. Crying, she ran to her stepmother and told of her misfortune. The stepmother scolded her violently and said she would not forgive her till she had fetched the spindle out of the well again. The girl went back to the well, not knowing what to do. At last, in her fear of more scolding, she plunged into the well. She lost consciousness, and when she came to herself, she was lying on a green meadow in the sunshine, surrounded by thousands of lovely flowers. She rose and walked across the meadow till she came to a bake-oven full of bread.





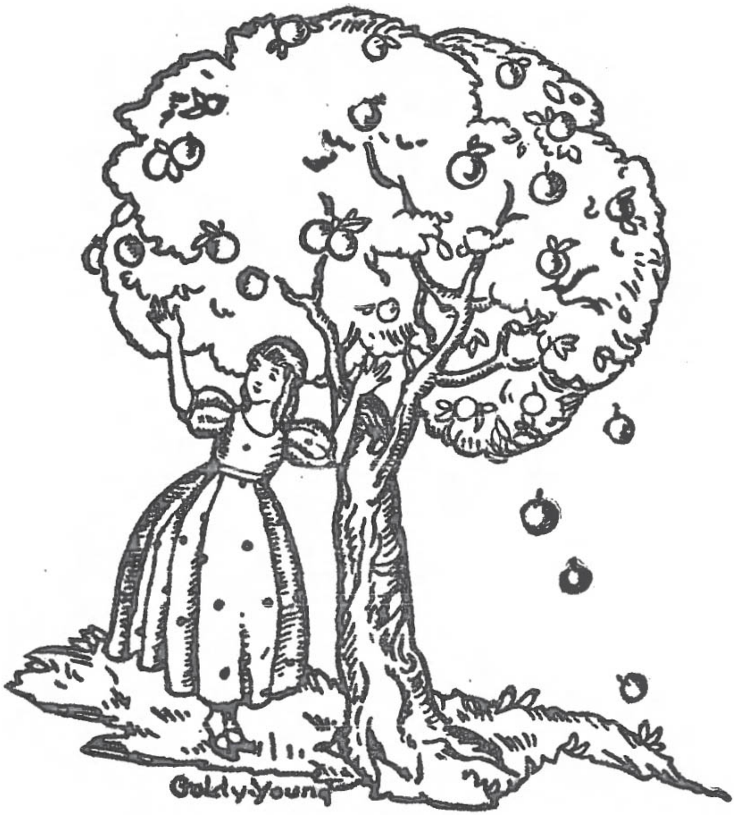
The bread said, “Take me out, take me out, or I shall burn; I’ve been baking so long.”

The girl advanced, and with the bread-shovel took all the loaves out, one after the other. Then she went farther, and came to a tree laden with apples, which cried, “Shake me, shake me; my apples are all too ripe.”

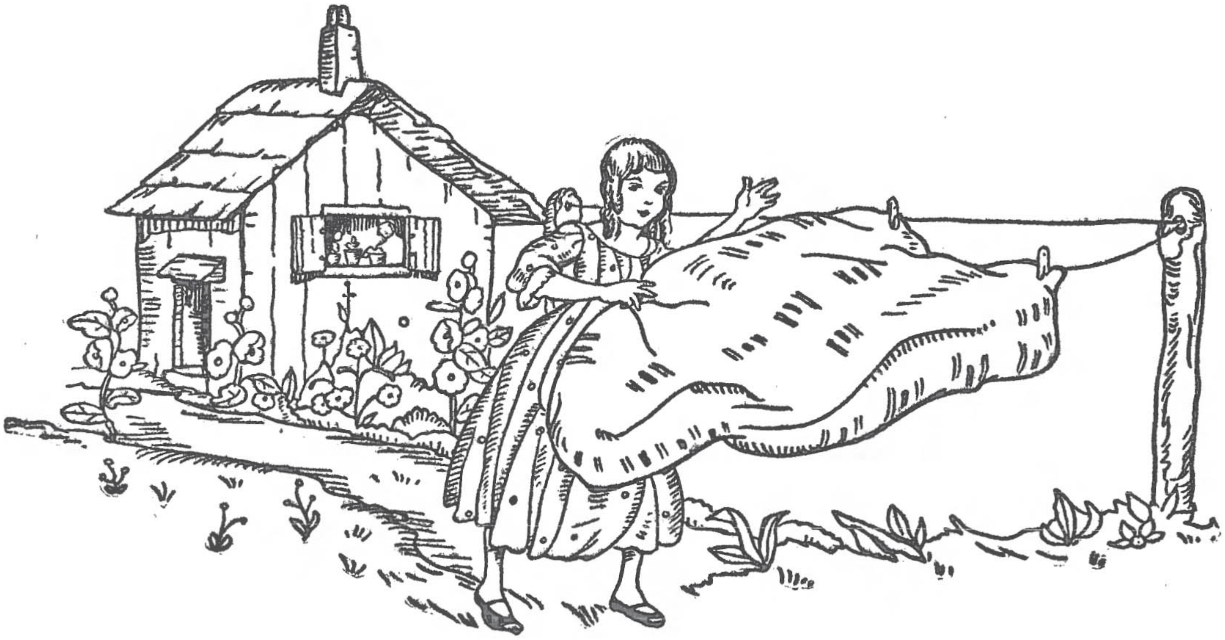
So she shook the tree, and the apples rained down by hundreds, till there were no more left on the tree. Then she gathered them in a heap and went on.

At last she came to a small house. An old woman peeped out of the window at her, but she had such big teeth that the girl was frightened and wanted to run away. The old woman called out, “Why are you frightened, dear? Stay with me, and if you will do my house-work properly you shall have a nice home here. You must be careful to make my bed well and shake the mattress till the feathers fly about, and then it will snow in the world. I am Mother Holle.”

Because the old woman spoke so kindly, the girl took heart, and consented to work for her. She performed all her duties to the old woman’s satisfaction, and shook up the mattress till the feathers flew about like snowflakes; so she had a comfortable home, and had meat, either boiled or roasted, every day for dinner.



After a time, she grew sad, and did not know at first what was the matter, but at last she was certain it was homesickness; although it was a thousand times pleasanter at Mother Holle’s than at home, yet she had a longing to go.



At last she could bear it no longer; so she went to Mother Holle and said, “I have a great yearning for home, and though I like everything down here very much, I cannot stay, but must go up to my people.”

To which Mother Holle replied, “I am pleased to hear you say you wish to go home, and as you have served me well and faithfully, I will take you up myself.”

She took the girl by the hand and led her to a great gateway. The gate opened, and as the girl was standing just under it, a shower of gold fell over her, and all the gold hung on her clothes, so that she was covered from head to foot.

“You shall have all this because you have been so industrious,” said Mother Holle.

Then Mother Holle gave her, with a smile, the spindle which she had let fall into the well.

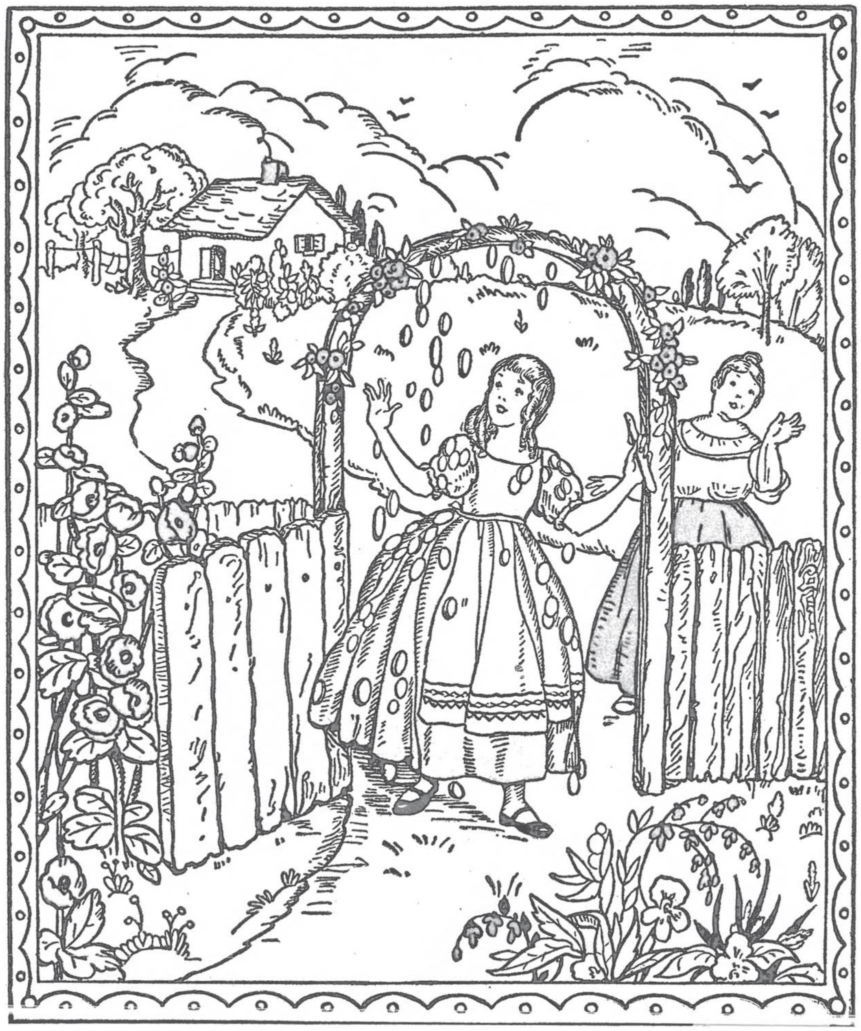
Suddenly the gate was shut with a bang, and the girl was up in the world again, not far from her mother’s house.

When she came into the yard the cock sat on the pump and cried:

“Cock-a-doodle-do.
Our golden girl has come home again.”

Then the girl went in to her mother, and because she was covered with gold her mother and her sister received her kindly.

The girl told them all her adventures, and hearing how she had come into such riches, the mother planned that her ugly, lazy daughter should get her share too. She sent her to spin by the well, and, to make her spindle bloodstained, she pricked her finger and put her hand into a hedge of thorns. Then she threw the spindle down the well and jumped in after it.



A Shower of Gold Fell Over Her

Like the other girl, she came to the beautiful meadow and followed the same path. When she reached the bake-oven, the bread shouted, “Take me out, take me out, or I shall burn.”

But the lazy girl answered, “I don’t want to dirty myself, thank you,” and continued her walk.

Soon she came to the apple-tree, which cried as before, “Shake me, shake me; my apples are all too ripe.”

She answered, “I dare say; but an apple might fall on my head,” and went on.

When she came to Mother Holle’s little house she was not afraid, because she had been warned that the good woman had big teeth. The first day the ugly girl tried hard to be industrious and to obey the wishes of Mother Holle, because she thought of all the gold that was to be her reward; on the second day, however, she began to be idle; on the third she was worse, as she almost refused to get up early in the morning, and she forgot to make Mother Holle’s bed properly and to shake the mattress till the down flew about.

Good Mother Holle by that time was tired of her, and gave her notice.

The lazy girl was quite content, and thought, “Now it’s time for the gold to rain!”

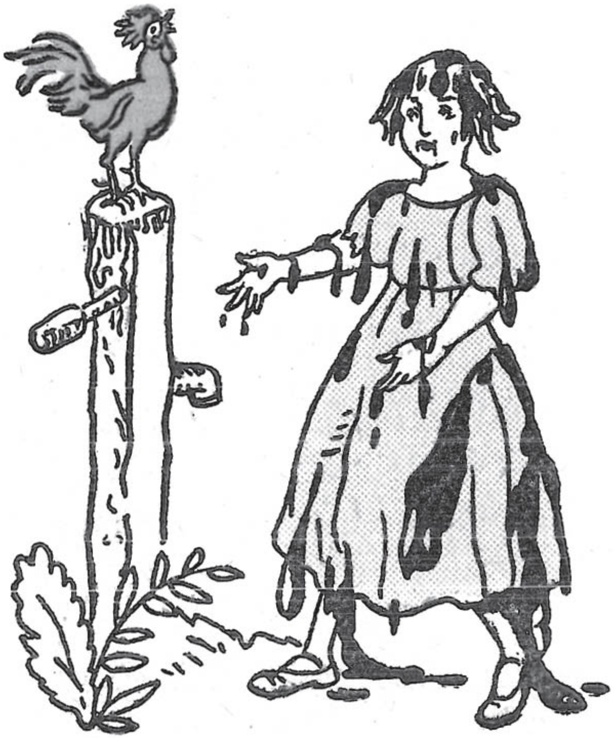
Mother Holle led her to the gateway, but as she stood under it, instead of gold, a great kettle of pitch was poured over her. “That is in reward for your services,” said Mother Holle.

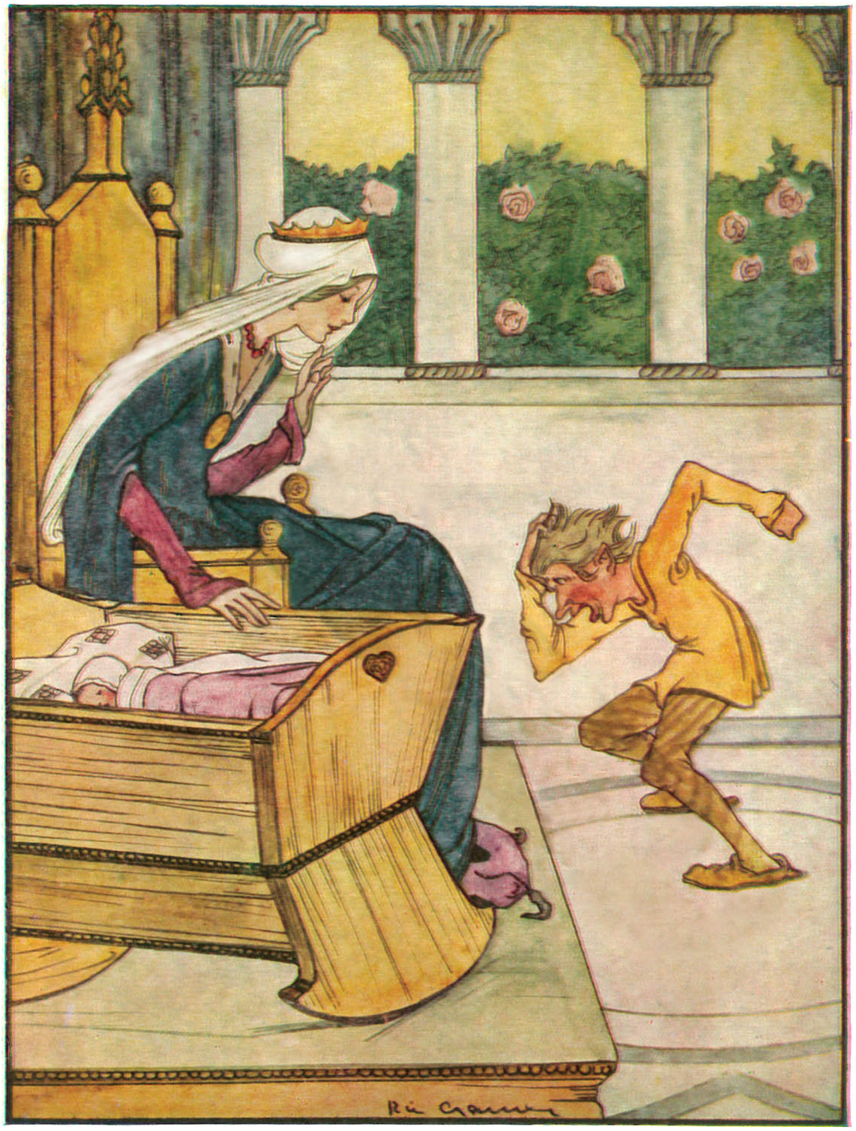
Then the great gate shut with a bang and the girl saw her mother’s cottage in the distance.

So the lazy girl went home covered with pitch and the cock on the pump, when he saw her, exclaimed in a loud, clear tone:

“Cock-a-doodle-do.
Our dirty girl has come home again.”

The pitch wouldn’t wash off, and it stuck to her till the end of her days.





"PERHAPS," SAID SHE, "YOUR NAME IS RUMPELSTILTSKIN?"

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

ONCE upon a time there was a miller who had a very beautiful daughter. She was not only beautiful, but also shrewd and clever; and her father was never tired of boasting about the wonderful things she could do.

One day, having to go to the palace on business, he told the King that his daughter could spin gold out of straw.

Now the King was very fond of money; and when he heard the miller's boast, he at once ordered the girl to be brought before him. Then he led her to a room where there was a great quantity of straw, gave her a spinning-wheel, and said, "All this straw must be spun into gold before morning; if it is not, you will surely be put to death."

It was in vain that the poor maiden declared that she could do no such thing; the door was locked and she was left alone.

She sat down in one corner and began to weep, when suddenly the door opened, and a funny little man hobbled in, and said, "Good morrow, my lass, what are you crying for?"

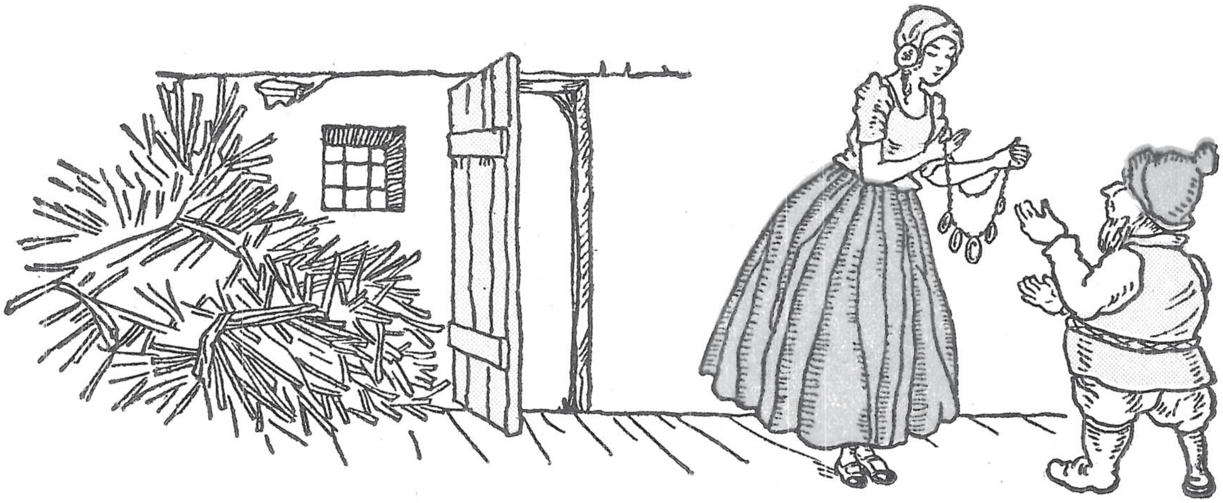
"Alas," said she, "I must spin all this straw into gold, and I don't even know how to begin."

"What will you give me," asked the little man, "to spin it for you?"

"My beautiful necklace," replied the maiden.

The dwarf took her at her word, and sat himself down to the wheel; round and round it went merrily, and presently the work was done and all the gold spun.

When the King came and saw this, he was greatly surprised and pleased; but his heart grew still more greedy, and he shut up the poor miller's daughter in another room with a fresh task. She did not know what to do, and sat down once more to weep; but the little man presently opened the door, and asked, "What will you give me to do your task?"



"This diamond ring," she replied.

So her little friend took the ring, and worked away at the wheel till by morning all was finished again.

The King was delighted to see the gold; but still he was not satisfied and took the girl into a larger room, and said, "If all this is spun tonight, you shall be my Queen."

As soon as she was alone the dwarf came in, and asked: "What will you give me to spin the gold for you this time?"

"I have nothing left to give," said she.

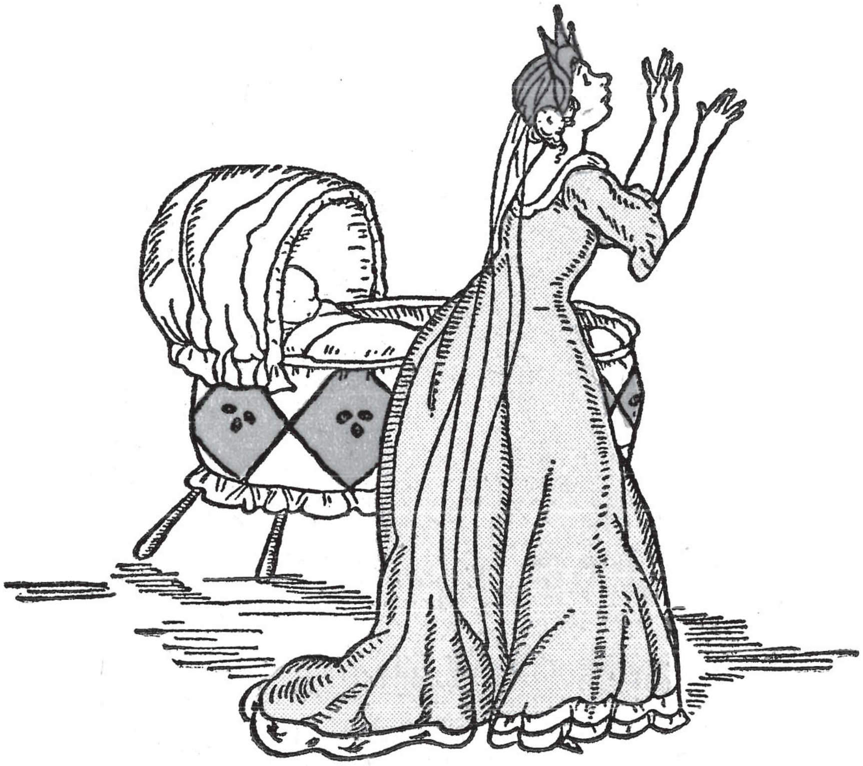
"Then promise me," said the little man, "your first little child when you are Queen."

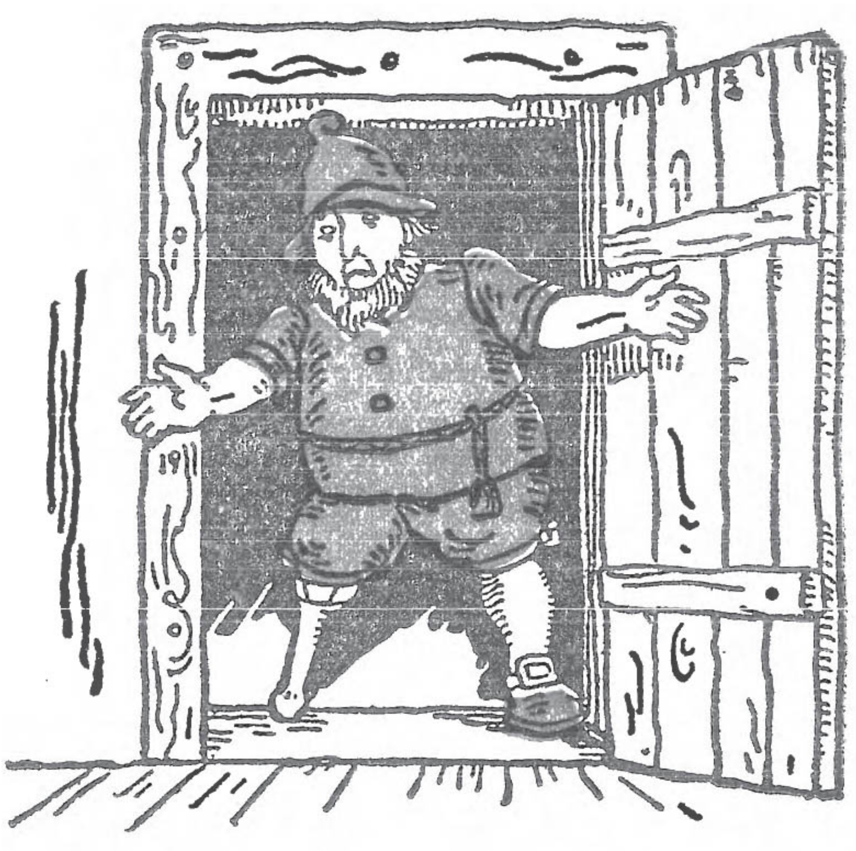
“That may never be,” thought the miller’s daughter; and as she knew no other way to get her task done, she promised what he asked, and once more he spun the whole heap of gold.

The King came in the morning, and finding all the gold he wanted, married her.

At the birth of her first little child the Queen rejoiced greatly, quite forgetting the little man and her promise. But one day he came into her room and reminded her of it. Then she grieved sadly at her misfortune, and offered him all the treasures of the kingdom in exchange; at last he said, “I will give you three days’ grace, and if during that time you tell me my name, you shall keep your child.”

The next day the little man came, and she began with Timothy, Benjamin, Jeremiah, and all the names she could remember; but to all of them he said, “That’s not my name.”





The second day she began with all the comical names she had ever heard of, Bandy-legs, Hunchbacks, Crook-Shanks, and so on, but still she could not guess his name.

The third day, back came a trusted messenger which the Queen had sent out, and said, “As I was climbing a high hill among the trees of the forest, I saw a little hut, and before the hut burned a fire, and round about the fire a funny little man danced a little jig upon one leg, and sang:

“Today I’ll brew, tomorrow bake;
Merrily I’ll dance and sing,
Tomorrow will a baby bring;
The lady cannot stop my game,
Rumpelstiltskin is my name!”

When the Queen heard this, she jumped for joy. Soon her little visitor came in, and asked, “Now, lady, what is my name?”

“Is it John?” asked she.

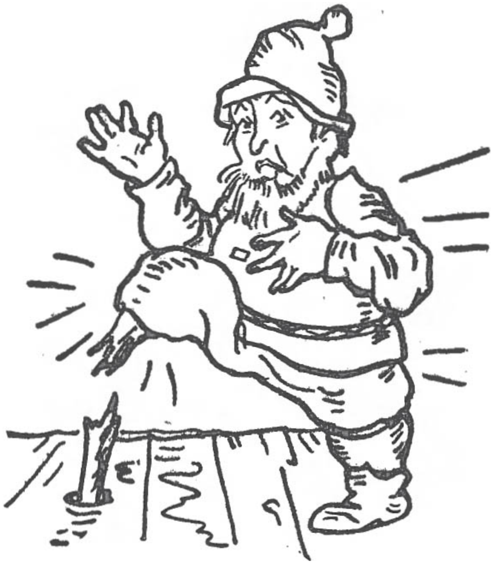
“No!”

“Tom?”

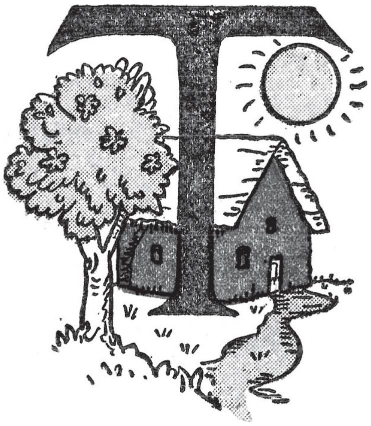
“No!”

“Can your name be Rumpelstiltskin?”

“Some witch told you that! Some witch told you that!” cried the little man, in a rage, and dashed his right foot so deeply into the floor that he was forced to take hold of it with both hands to pull it out. Then he twirled away, and the Queen never saw him again.



THE BLUE LIGHT



THERE was once a soldier who had served his King faithfully for many years. But when peace was proclaimed and the war was over, the King said to the soldier, who had been wounded several times, “Now you can go home; I require your services no longer. I cannot give you further pay, for I pay only those who earn money.”

The poor soldier did not know how he could live. He tramped homewards, and on his way found himself in a great forest. When darkness fell, he saw a light which came from a cottage in which an old witch lived. “Give me a bed and something to eat and drink,” he said to her, “or I shall perish.”

“Ho, ho,” she answered, “who would care to feed a deserter for nothing? However, I will have compassion on you and take you in, if you will do whatever I wish.”

“What do you wish me to do?” asked the soldier.

“To dig my garden tomorrow.”

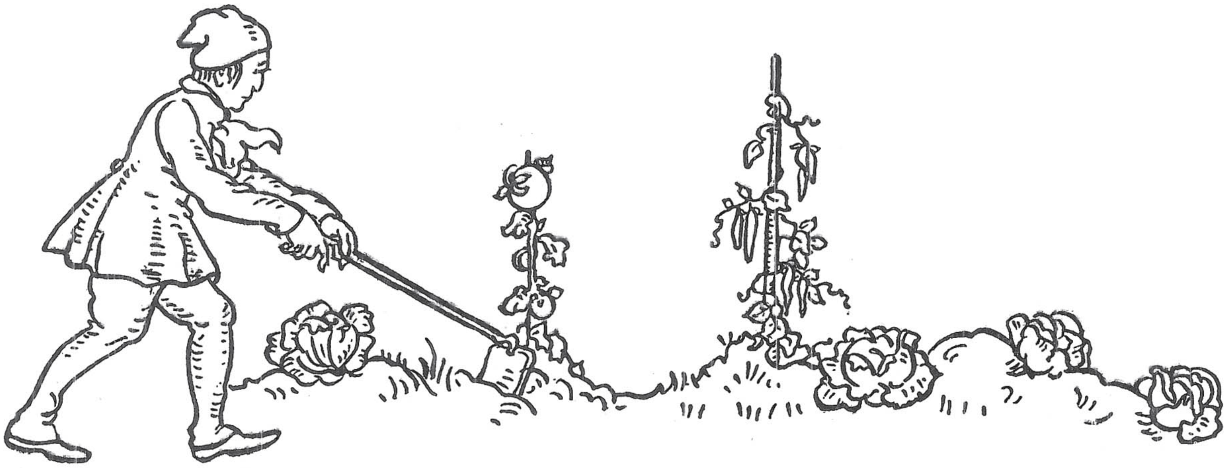
The soldier consented, and worked the next day with all his strength. However, he could not get it done by the evening.

“I see,” said the witch, “that you can’t do any more tonight, so I will keep you another night, and in return your task is to chop a clump of wood for me into little pieces.”

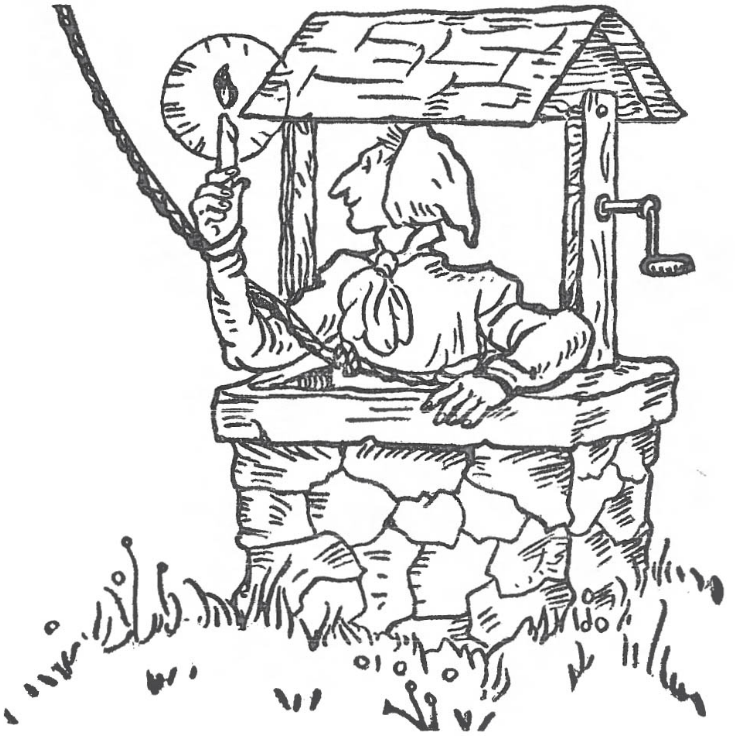
The soldier took the whole day over it, and in the evening the witch proposed that he should stay another night.

“Tomorrow I have only a very light task for you. Behind my house is an old dried-up well into which I have dropped my light, a blue one, which is never extinguished. You shall fetch it for me.”

The next day the old crone led him to the well, and lowered him in a basket. He found the blue light, and made a sign to her to draw him up again. She drew him up, but when he reached the edge of the well she held out her hand to seize the blue light. But he, seeing her evil design, said, “No, I shall not give you the light till I am standing with both feet on the ground.” Then the witch lost her temper, let him drop into the well again, and went away.



The poor soldier fell, without hurting himself, to the bottom. The blue light still burned, but what help was that? He saw death staring him in the face. For a while he sat lost in sad reflection. Then he chanced to put his hand in his pocket and found his pipe, which was half filled with tobacco. “This shall be my last enjoyment,” he said; and he drew it out, lit it with the blue light, and began to smoke. As the smoke rose and floated on the air, a little black man suddenly appeared and said:



“Sir, what are your orders?”

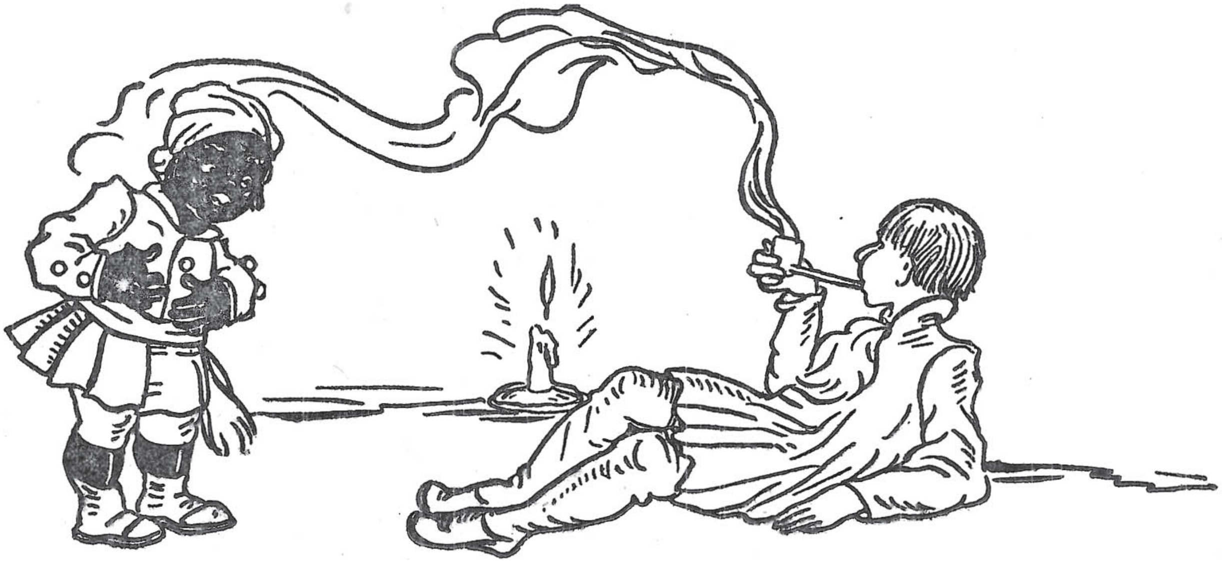
“Why should I order you about?” asked the soldier, astonished.

“I must do all,” said the man, “that you desire.”

“Very well,” said the soldier, “help me out of the well.”

The little man took his hand and led him through an underground passage, not forgetting to take the blue light, too. He showed him, on the way, the treasure the witch had collected and hidden here, and the soldier helped himself to as much gold as he could carry.

When he was above ground he said to the little man, “Go, please, bind the witch hand and foot, and take her before the judge.”



In a few minutes she flashed by on the back of a wild tom cat, screaming horribly, and the mannikin said, “It is all over; by this time she hangs on the gallows.”

Then the little man said, “Sir, I await further orders.”

The soldier replied, “Just now I have nothing more for you to do; you can go home, only, if I call you, be ready.”

“It is not necessary to call,” explained the little man, “you have only to light your pipe with the blue light and I shall be beside you at once.” And he instantly vanished.

The soldier went back to the town. He went to the best inn, bought fine clothes, and ordered a room to be splendidly fitted up for him. When it was ready he summoned the black mannikin and said, “I served the King faithfully, but he sent me away to starve, and now I wish to be revenged on him.”

“What am I to do?” asked the little fellow.

“Go in the night to the palace, and bring me the King’s daughter to be my maid-servant.”

The little man said, “An easy thing for me to do, but a very dangerous undertaking for you if anyone should learn of it.”

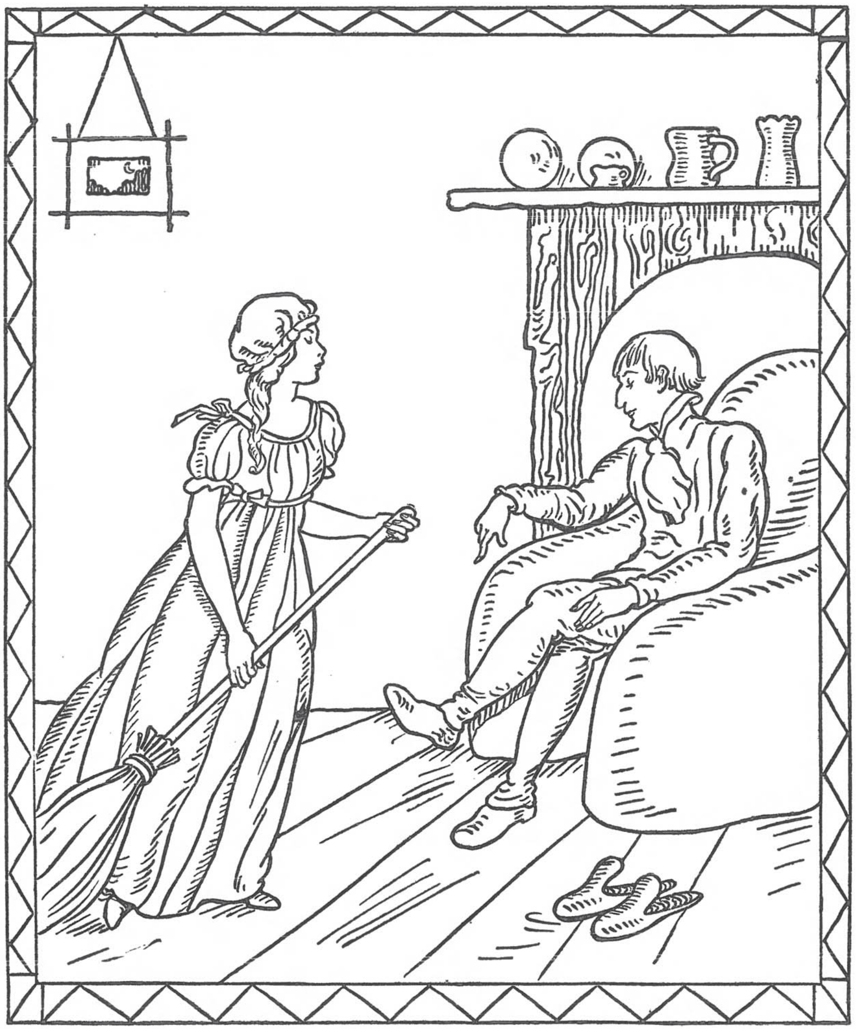
On the stroke of midnight the door sprang open, and the little man brought in the King’s daughter.

“Ah, there you are!” exclaimed the soldier. “Fetch the broom at once and sweep out the room.”

When she had finished sweeping, he called her to his armchair, stuck out his legs, and ordered her to take off his boots. He then threw them in her face, and told her to clean and polish them. She did everything without showing a sign of resistance, silently, and with half-closed eyes. At cock-crow the little black man carried her back to the palace and laid her in her bed.

The next morning she went to her father and told him she had had a wonderful dream. “I was carried as quickly as a flash of lightning through the streets and brought into a soldier’s room. I was obliged to serve him like a common servant, sweep the room, and brush his boots. Although it was only a dream, I am as tired as it I had really done it.”

“Perhaps it was more than a dream,” said the King. “Take my advice and fill your pocket full of peas; then make a tiny hole in the pocket, and if you are fetched again, the peas will fall out in the street and show the way.”

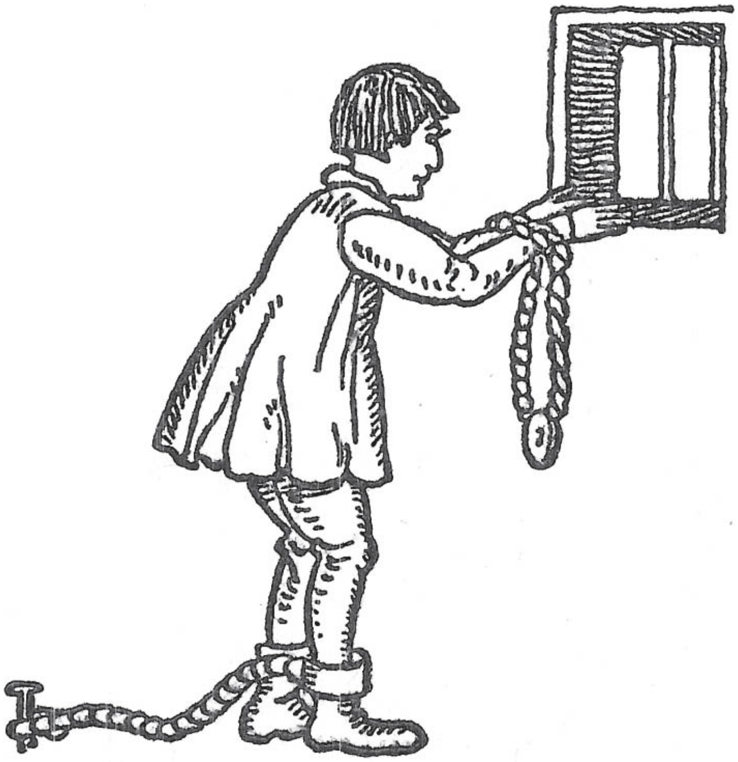


The King’s Daughter Was Forced to Sweep the Floor

While the King was speaking, the little black man stood by, invisible, and heard all. At night, when he again carried the sleeping Princess through the streets, some of the peas, it is true, fell on the pavement, but they had no effect, for the cunning little man had beforehand strewn all the streets with peas. Again the Princess had to drudge till cock-crow like a common servant.

The next day the King sent out men, but on a fool’s errand, for in every street the poor children were picking up peas and saying, “Last night it must have rained peas.”

“We must think of another plan.,” said the King. “Keep on your shoes when you go to bed, and leave one behind at the place you are carried to, and I will have it found.”

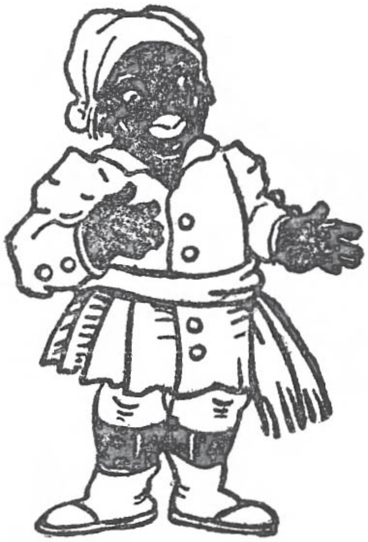


The black mannikin heard, and when he was requested to bring the Princess to the soldier that night, he said, “I am baffled this time; if the shoe is found in your room, things may go badly with you.”

“Do as I tell you,” answered the soldier.

So for a third night the Princess came and worked like a servant. But before she was carried away she hid one of her shoes under the bed.

The following morning the King had the whole town searched for his daughter’s shoe; it was found in the soldier’s apartment. The soldier, acting on the advice of the little black man, had hurried out at the town gates, but he was soon overtaken and cast into prison. In the flight he had forgotten his most priceless property, the blue light and the witch’s gold. He only had a few small coins on him.



Loaded with chains, he was standing at his prison window when he saw one of his old comrades go by.

The poor soldier tapped on the window-pane, and as the man drew near, said to him, “If you will go to my inn and fetch a small bundle I have left there on the table, I will give you something for your trouble.”

The comrade ran quickly and brought him the bundle. As soon as the soldier was alone, he kindled his pipe with his blue light, and his little black friend stood beside him.

“Don’t be afraid,” he said, “go with them calmly wherever they take you, but don’t forget the blue light.”

The next day the soldier was tried by the judges, and though they could not prove that he had done anything wrong, he was condemned to death. When he was brought to the gallows, he besought the King to grant him a last favor.

“What sort of a favor?” asked the King.

“That I may smoke a pipe on the way.”

“You may smoke three pipes; but remember they won’t save your life,” retorted the King, who could see no harm in granting the poor soldier’s last request.

The soldier drew out his pipe, lit it with the blue light, and before a ring of smoke had floated on the air, the little man, with a cudgel in his hand, stood before him, to the great astonishment of the King and his men.

“What orders, my master?” asked the little man.

“Strike the false judges to the ground, and do not spare the monarch who has treated me so shamefully,” was the soldier’s command.

The small man lashed about with fury, and felled every one round him to the earth. The King groveled on the ground, and, in order to save his life, promised the soldier his kingdom and his daughter.

So the brave soldier married the King’s daughter and they lived happily ever after.

THE SHOES THAT WERE DANCED INTO HOLES

ONCE upon a time there was a King who had twelve daughters, each more beautiful than the others. They slept together in a hall, where their beds stood close together in a row, and every night the King locked and bolted the door, so that they could not leave during the night.

In the morning, when the door was unlocked, he saw their shoes had been danced into holes, and it was a mystery how this had happened. The King issued a proclamation saying that whoever could find out how the shoes were danced into holes in the night should have one of the twelve sisters for his wife and should succeed to the throne after the King’s death, but whoever undertook to solve the mystery and had not done so in three days and three nights should forfeit his life.

Soon afterwards a Prince announced his readiness to attempt the solution of the problem. He was courteously received, and in the evening led into a room adjoining the hall. A bed was made up there and he was to watch who went in and danced in the sleeping apartment of the twelve sisters. Unfortunately, the Prince’s eyelids soon felt heavy; and he went off to sleep; when he awoke in the morning it was clear that all twelve sisters had been to a dance, for there were holes in all the shoes. The second and third nights he succeeded no better, and his head was cut off.

After that several more princes and noblemen came, but all met the same fate and lost their heads. Then it happened that a poor wounded soldier was passing through the town, and when an old woman asked him what he was doing there, he replied in jest:

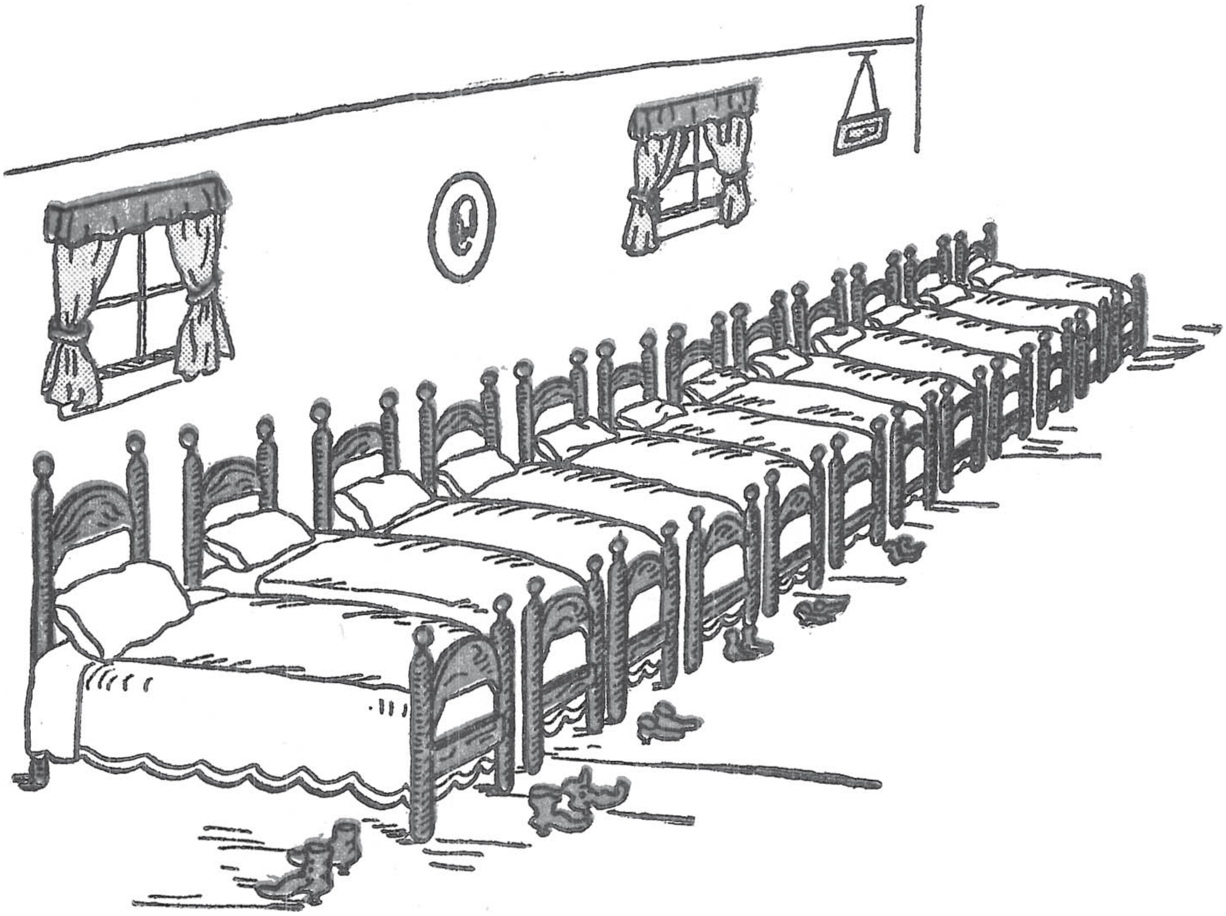
"I have half a mind to offer myself as a spy on the twelve Princesses and see where they go to dance their shoes in holes every night, and then to become King for my trouble."

The old woman took him seriously and said, "It is not so difficult as you suppose; all you have to do is not to drink the wine brought to you at night, and to sham being sound asleep." Thereupon she gave him a little cloak and said, "If you throw this over you, you will become invisible and can glide after the twelve maidens and see where they go."

The soldier, on hearing this advice, went in for the venture in good earnest and let himself be announced as a suitor. He was received with as much politeness as his predecessors and given royal raiment to put on. At bedtime he was led into the ante-chamber, and was getting into bed when the eldest daughter brought him a goblet of wine. He did not drink a drop of it, but let it all soak into a sponge he had tied under his chin. He then lay down and after a few minutes began to snore as if he were in a deep slumber.

The twelve Princesses heard his snores, and the eldest said, "He, too, might have spared his trouble and his life."

Then they got up, opened wardrobes, drawers, and boxes, out of which they took lovely dresses, and they decked themselves before their looking-glasses, skipping gaily about, overjoyed at the prospect of their dance.



The youngest seemed slightly depressed and said, “I don’t know why you are all in such high spirits. I, for my part, feel as if some misfortune were hanging over us.”

“You absurd goose,” said the oldest. “What is there to be afraid of? Don’t you remember how many royal people have tried in vain to find out our secret? I have given the soldier a sleeping draught like I gave the others, and you may depend the lout won’t wake.”

When they were all ready to start, they looked at the soldier and saw that his eyes were shut and that he lay perfectly still, so they imagined that everything was all right.

The eldest went to the head of her bed and knocked on it; immediately it sank through the floor, and they climbed down the opening one after the other, the eldest leading the way.

The soldier, who had watched their movements, now rose, flung on his cloak, and followed at the heels of the youngest. In the middle of the staircase he stepped on her dress, and she exclaimed in a great fright:

“Who is that? Someone caught hold of my dress.”

“Don’t be silly,” said the eldest. “You only caught it on a hook.” And they went on till they reached the bottom. There they stood under a magnificent avenue of trees, the leaves of which were gold and silver, all flashing and gleaming.

The soldier thought, “You had better take a leaf as a witness,” and broke off a twig.

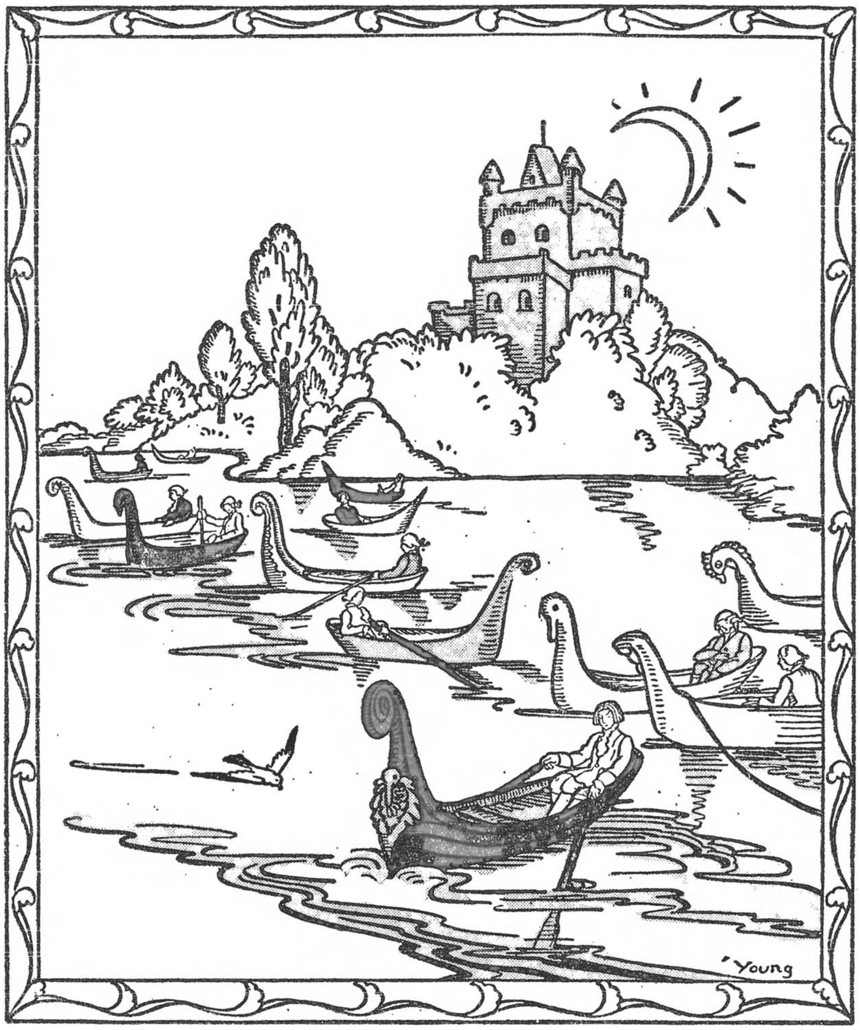
The tree creaked, and the youngest sister called out, “Something is going to happen. Didn’t you hear that noise?”

But the eldest again silenced her. “That was firing! Our Princes are firing salutes to welcome us.”

And now they came to an avenue where all the trees had leaves of diamonds, and the soldier broke off a twig, and there was another tremendous crack.

The youngest sister jumped from fear, but the eldest insisted that the noises were only salutes.

Next they came to a lake on which twelve boats were at anchor, and in each was a charming young Prince. They were waiting for the twelve Princesses, and when they came they paired off together.



Twelve Princes Were Coming Across the Lake

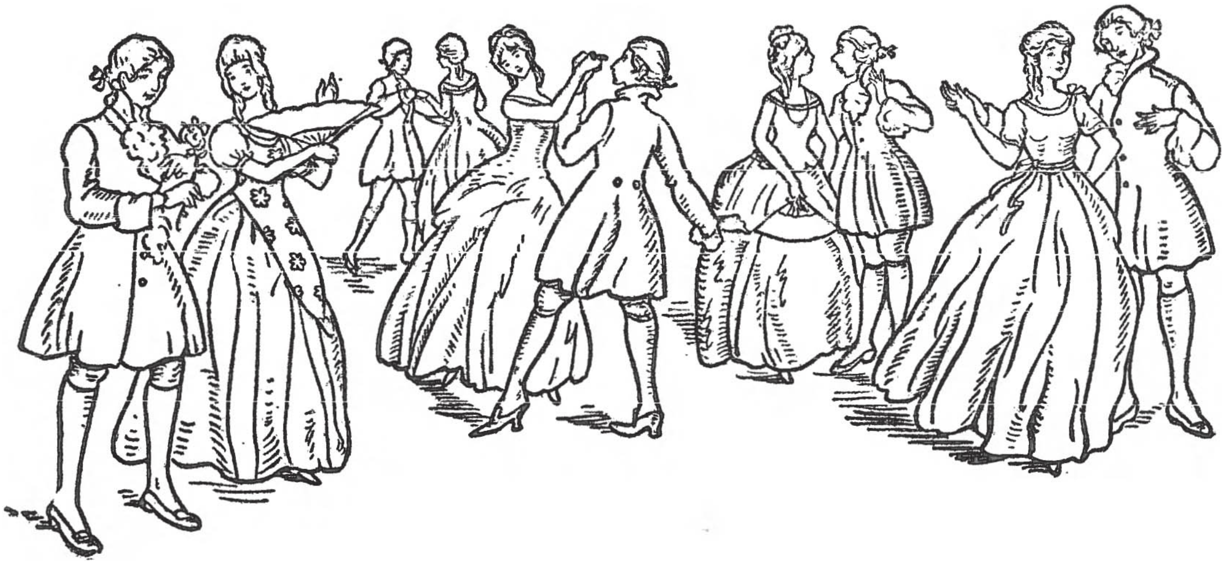
The soldier followed the youngest, and in a few minutes her Prince remarked, “How is it the boat seems so much heavier tonight? It is all I can do to move it.”

“It is because the weather is so hot,” suggested the youngest Princess. “I can hardly breathe.”

On the other side of the lake stood a beautiful castle, brilliantly lit up, and from it came the sound of music. They all landed and entered together, and the couples danced, the soldier dancing invisibly. Whenever they stopped to refresh themselves with wine, he emptied the goblets just as they were lifting them to their lips.

This frightened the youngest Princess, but, as usual, the eldest silenced her. So they danced on till three o’clock in the morning, and by that time all their shoes were in holes, and they were obliged to leave off.

When they reached the staircase again, the soldier slipped in front and went back to bed; and as the sisters, with lagging footsteps, tired and yawning, came into their apartment, he was already snoring as loudly as ever. They took off their lovely frocks, put them away, kicked their shoes under their beds, and lay down.



The next morning the soldier did not say anything, but watched the same spectacle the second and third nights. Everything happened just the same, and the Princesses danced and danced till their shoes were almost in pieces.

The third time he took, as evidence of what he had seen, a goblet instead of a twig from the trees.

When the hour arrived when he was to go to the King, he put the twigs and the goblet under his coat. The twelve girls stationed themselves behind the door to listen to what was said.

In answer to the King's question, "Where have my daughters danced their shoes into holes during the night?" he replied:

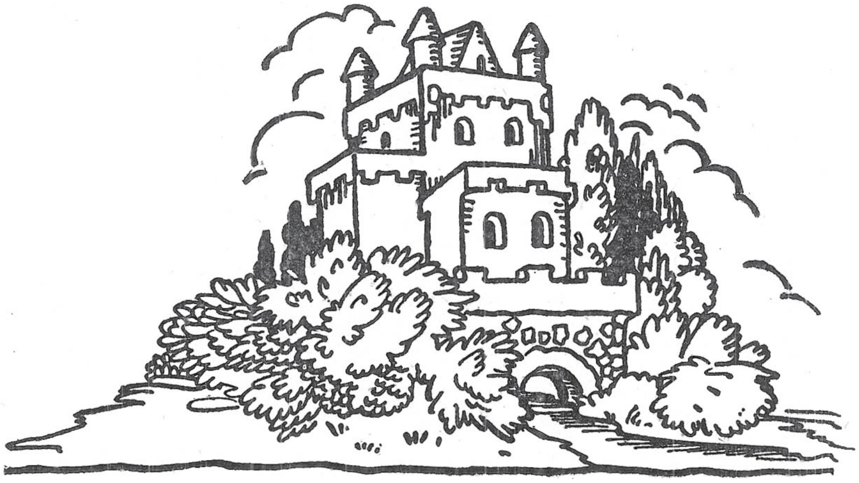
"In an underground castle, with twelve Princes," and he produced his evidence.

Thereupon the King ordered his daughters to come before him, and asked whether the soldier spoke the truth. Seeing that they were found out and that it would be useless to deny anything, they confessed.

Then the King said, "Which of my daughters will you choose for your wife?"

The soldier answered: "As I am not so very young, I'll have the eldest."

So their marriage was celebrated and the soldier inherited the kingdom.



THE GOLDEN GOOSE

ONCE there was a man who had three sons. The youngest, called Dunderhead, was mocked and ridiculed by the other two, and on every opportunity they slighted him. Once it happened that the eldest brother wanted to go into the forest to hew wood, and his mother gave him a delicious egg-pancake and a bottle of wine to take with him, for his lunch.

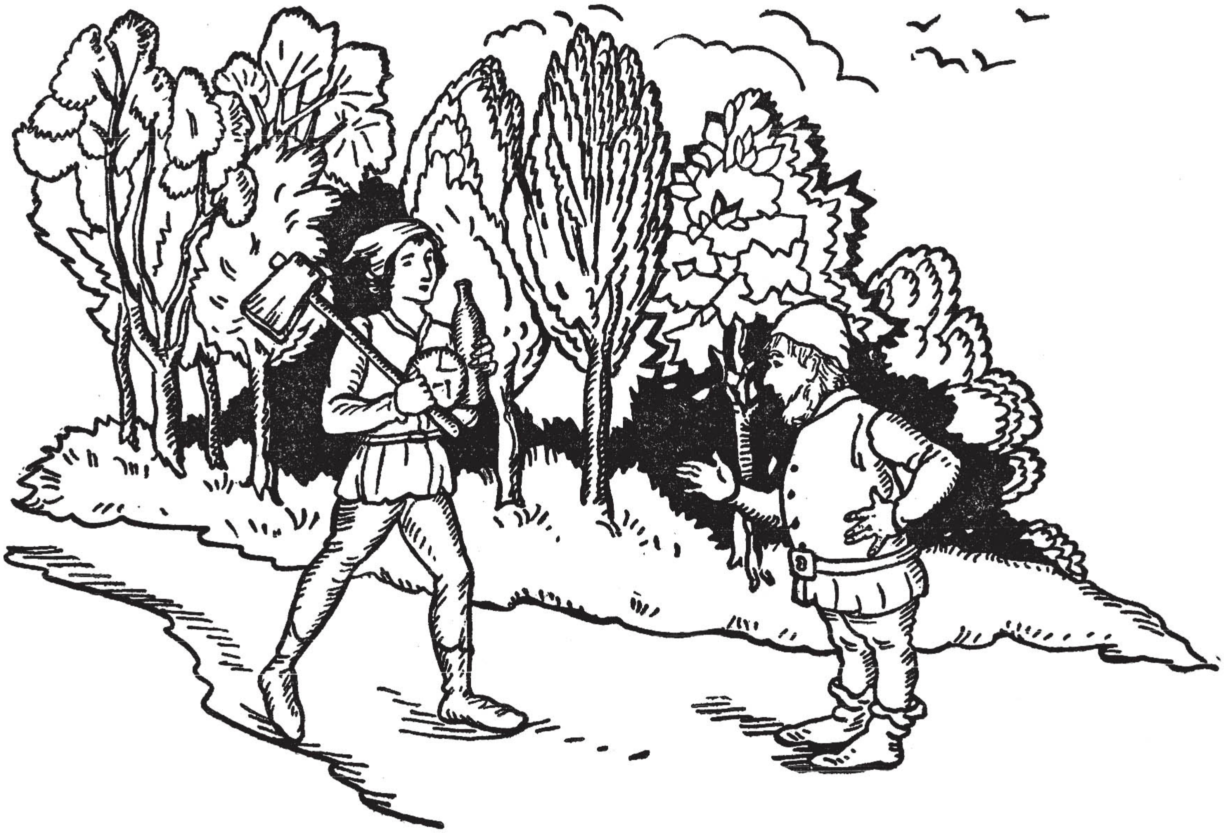
When he reached the forest, he met a little greyhaired old man, who wished him good day, and said, “Give me a piece of cake out of your wallet and a sip of wine; I am terribly hungry and thirsty.”

The clever son answered, “Why should I give you my cake and wine, and have none for myself? Get away from here!” and he passed by the old grey haired man with contempt.

When he began to chop a tree he soon make a false stroke, and the axe struck his arm instead of the timber, so that he was obliged to go home and have the arm bound up.

The second son then went out to the forest, and his mother gave him, as she had given the eldest, a pancake and a bottle of wine. He, too, saw the grey-haired little man, who begged from him a morsel of cake and a sip of wine.

But the second son also spoke very harshly in reply, “I am not going to rob myself to feed you,” and passed on, leaving the little man standing with outstretched hands. He, too, met his punishment, for instead of hitting the tree, he hit his own leg, and had to be carried home.



Then the dunderhead said, “Father, let me go out and hew wood.”

His father answered, “Look what harm your brothers have done themselves by going. You understand nothing about it, and had better leave it alone.”

The dunderhead, however, begged so earnestly that at last his father consented.

His mother gave him for a lunch a cake cooked in the ashes, with water and a bottle of sour beer.

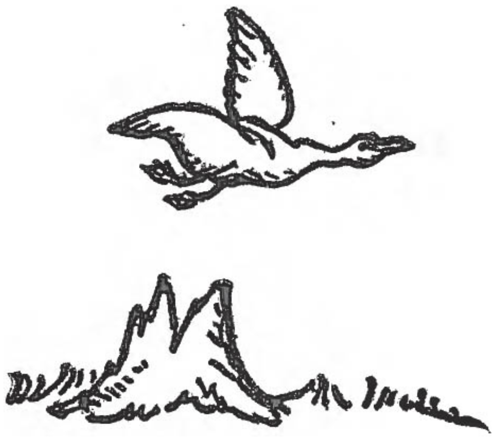
When he came into the forest he saw the little grey-headed old man, who greeted him and said, “Give me a bit of your cake and a drink of your wine.”

So they sat down, and as the dunderhead produced his ash cake it turned into an egg-pancake, and the sour beer turned into good wine.

After they had eaten and drunk, the little man said, “Because you have a kind heart, and have shared your meal with me, I will do you a good turn.

Over there stands an old tree; cut it down and you will find something worth having.”

The dunderhead went and cut down the tree, and as it fell, a goose flew out, with feathers of real gold. He picked it up and went to an inn to pass the night. The landlord had three daughters, who were curious when they saw the wonderful goose, and longed to possess one of its golden feathers. The eldest thought, “Probably I shall have an opportunity of plucking one of the golden feathers out,” and when the dunderhead had gone out of the room she caught hold of the bird by its wings, but she could not withdraw her hand, for her fingers were stuck fast. A moment later her sister came in with the idea of taking a feather, but she scarcely touched her sister before she was stuck fast too. Then the third sister appeared, and though the others shouted out, “For Heaven’s sake, don’t come here”; she rushed up to see what they were doing, and remained sticking fast; so all three of them had to pass the night there.



The next morning the dunderhead took up his goose and departed, not troubling himself about the three girls hanging on behind, who were forced to follow him.

In the middle of the fields they met the pastor, and when he saw the little procession he said, “Aren’t you ashamed of yourselves, you bold, forward girls, to run after a young fellow over the fields in this fashion?”

Whereupon he seized the youngest one by the hand and tried to draw her back, but could not free himself, and so had to run on with the rest.

In a few minutes they met the sexton, who looked astounded at seeing the parson following at the heels of three girls. Then he ran up to him and caught him by the sleeve and, like the others, was stuck fast, and had to follow too.

As the five went on, one behind the other, they met two laborers coming out of the hayfields with their rakes. The parson shouted to them to set him and the sexton free. But no sooner had they touched the sexton than the laborers, whether they liked it or not, had to hook on; so that there were now seven people following the golden goose.

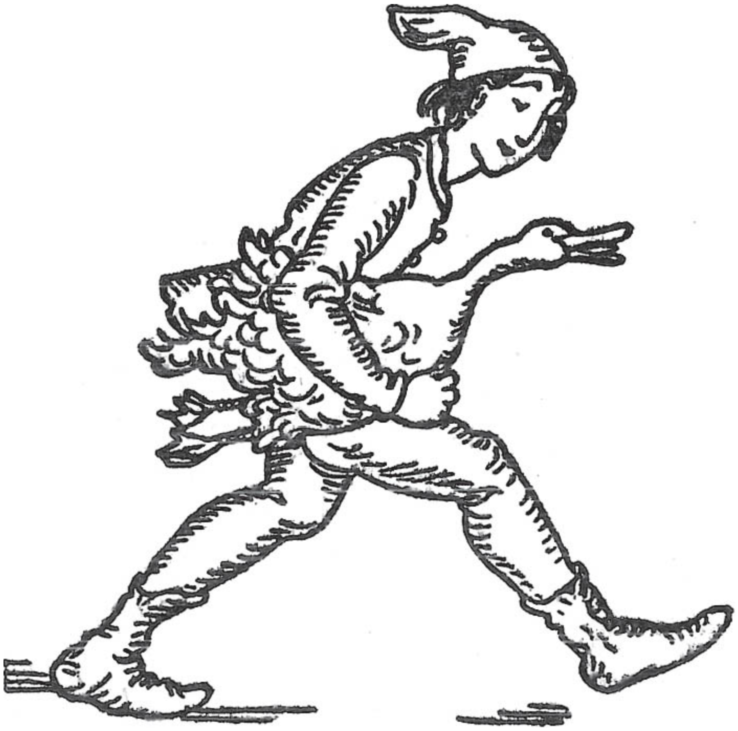
They came to a town where lived a King who had a daughter who was so serious that no one had ever succeeded in making her laugh. Therefore the King had declared that anyone who made her laugh should marry her.

The dunderhead, when he heard this, went into the Princess’s presence with his goose and followers, and when she saw the seven people hanging on to each other, one behind the other, she began to laugh so loudly that there was no stopping her.

The dunderhead then asked for her hand in marriage, but the King was not disposed to favor his suit. He raised endless objections and said that before he could consent to have him for a son-in-law he must bring him a man who could drink a whole cellar of wine.

The dunderhead bethought him of the little grey-headed old man, and went to the place in the forest where he had cut down the tree. There the little man was seated with a very distressed face. The dunderhead asked what was the matter.

He answered, “I am consumed with such a terrific thirst. Nothing will quench it. Cold water I cannot endure. I have already emptied a cask of wine, but what good is such a drop?”



“Come with me,” said the dunderhead. “I can help you.”

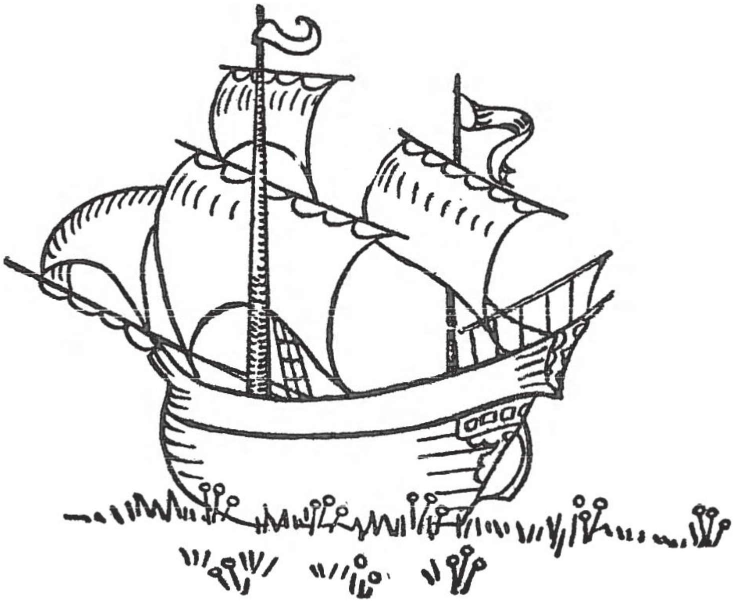
He led him into the King’s cellar.

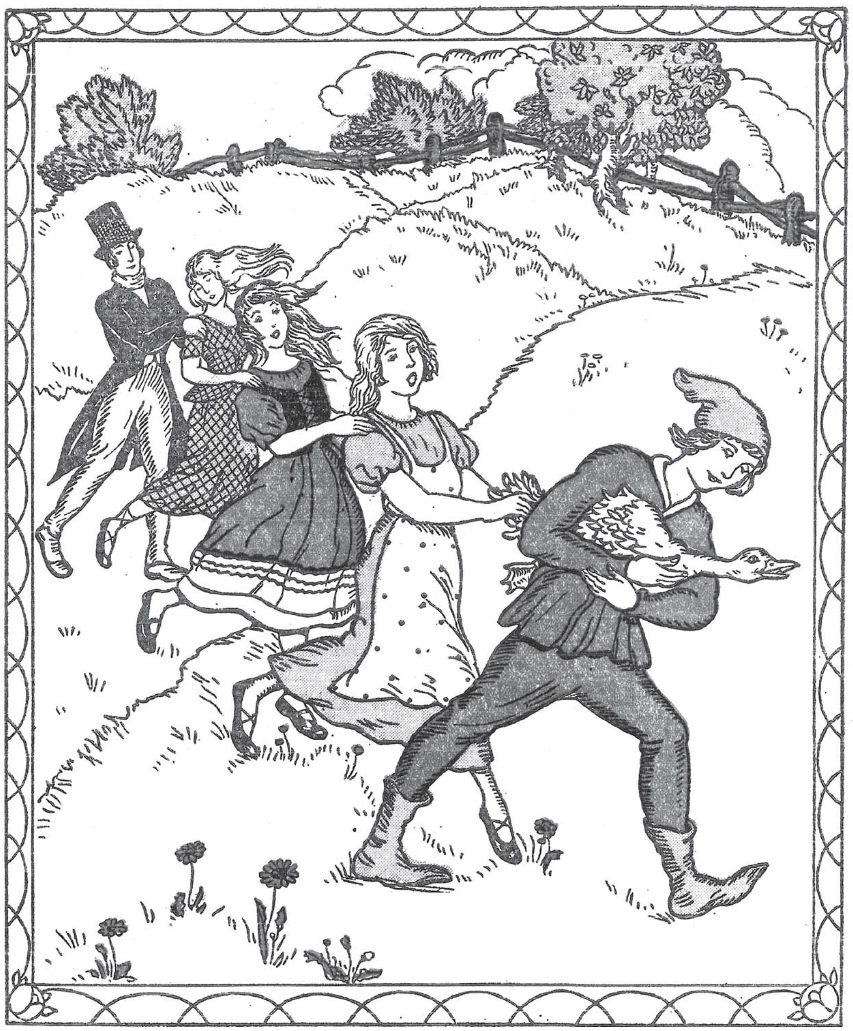
“Here you are,” said the dunderhead. “Drink and empty all the casks in this cellar. But remember, all this must be done before the sun sets.”

The little man began to drink and drink and by the end of the day he had emptied the cellar.

Again the dunderhead demanded the hand of the Princess, but the King imposed new and harder conditions. The King commanded the boy to bring a man to the court who could eat up a mountain of bread before the sun set.

The dunderhead again went to the place in the forest where he had cut down the tree.





There sat a man with a painful expression of countenance, lacing his body in with straps. “I have eaten a whole bakery full of rye bread,” he said, “but what is that when one suffers from such great hunger as mine?”

The dunderhead rejoiced greatly, and said, “Get up! I will show you how you can eat and be filled.” He led him to the court, where they had baked an enormous mountain of dough.

“Here you are,” said the dunderhead. “Eat up the mountain of bread and your hunger will be satisfied. But remember, the whole mountain of bread must be gone before the sun sets in the west.”

The man from the forest set to work and ate with such a will that in a day the whole structure had disappeared.

A third time the dunderhead demanded his bride, but once more the King tried to get out of the bargain.

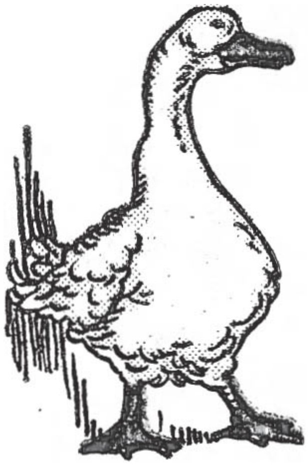
This time he asked to see a ship that could sail on dry land as well as on sea. “Sail up in it,” he said, “and you shall have my daughter for your wife.”

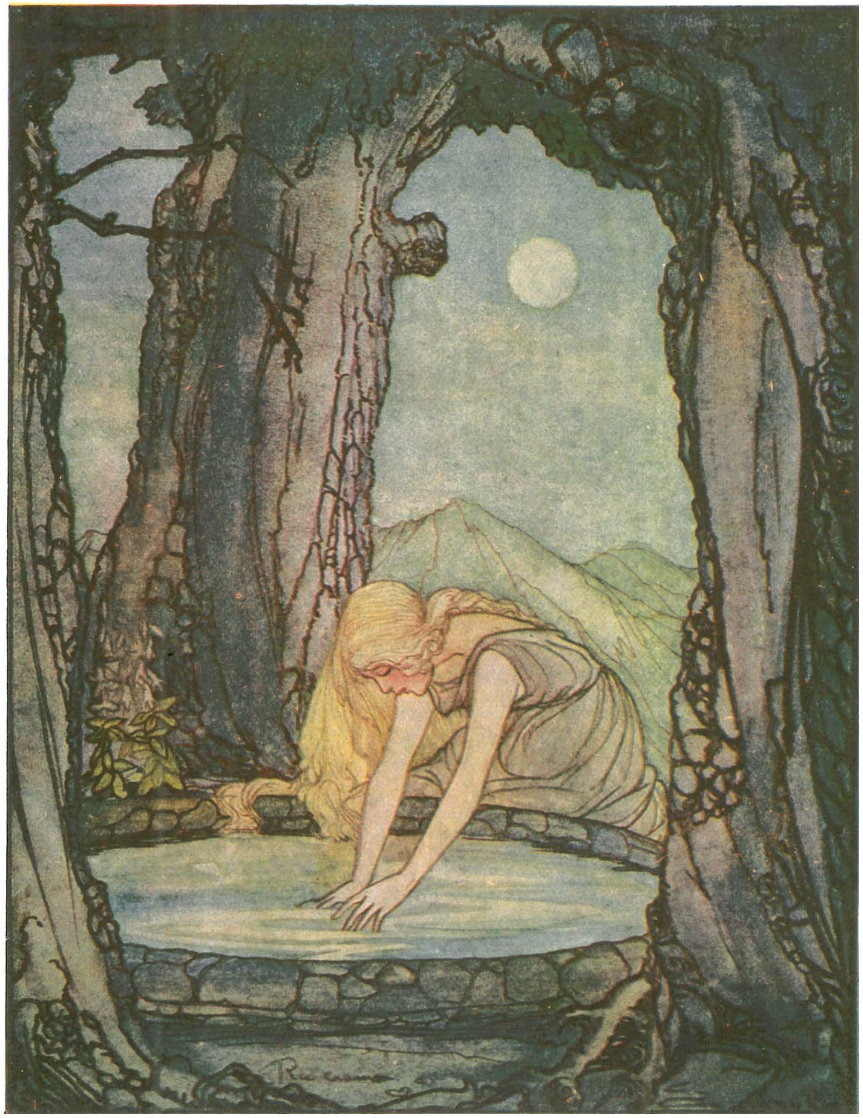
Without further delay the dunderhead departed again for the forest, and found the old grey headed little man, who said, “I have drunk for you and eaten for you, and now I will provide you gladly with the ship. I have done all these things for you because you were kind to me.

The little man waved his hands, said some magic words. In a clearing between the trees there appeared a full-rigged ship, fully manned, sailing toward them.

“Here is your ship,” said the little man. “You see it sails well on the dry ground. Take it as a reward for your kindness to me.”

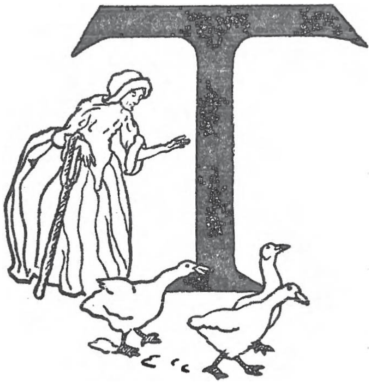
So he gave the youth a ship which sailed by land and sea. When the King saw it, he could no longer refuse to give the dunderhead his daughter and they lived happily ever afterward.





WHEN THE GRAY MASK FELL OFF, HER GOLDEN HAIR BROKE FORTH

THE GOOSE GIRL AT THE WELL



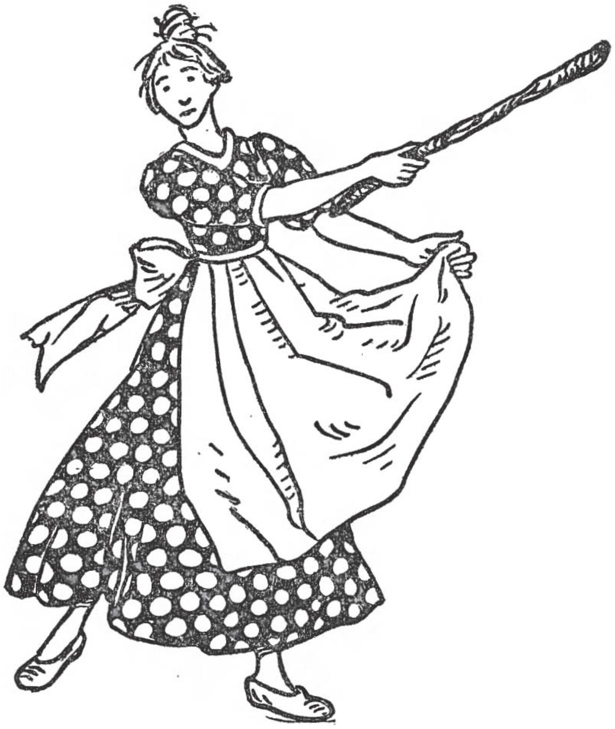
THERE was once an old, old woman, almost as old as the hills, who lived with her flock of geese in a wilderness between two mountains.

The wilderness was surrounded by a dense forest, and every morning the old woman took her crutches and stumped into the forest. Here she gathered grasses and wild berries and carried them home in a basket on her back.

One morning a fine young fellow came tramping through the forest. So far he had met no one, and then suddenly he saw the old crone kneeling on the ground mowing her grass with a sickle. She had stuffed a large bundle in her satchel and two baskets stood near, filled with wild pears and apples.

“Mother,” said he, “you’ll never be able to carry all that.”

“I must carry it all, pretty gentleman,” she said. “Rich people’s children wouldn’t need such things. But the poor peasant has a saying, ‘Be careful of the odds and ends.’”



The young man felt sorry for the old woman. “My father is no peasant,” he said. “I am the son of a rich Count; but to show that it is not only peasants who can carry heavy burdens, I will take your bundle.”

The woman thanked him and put her baskets on his shoulder. They were as heavy as if they had been made of lead and the young Count was sorry he had offered to help. Soon the old woman leaped to the top of the bundle and the youth was obliged to carry her also.

When the geese saw the old woman, they spread their wings, craned their necks, and flew towards her. Behind the flock came a strapping lass with a stick in her hand. Tall and muscular, she was as ugly as darkness itself.

The old woman now clambered down from her perch and relieved the Count of the bundle and the baskets. She said, “Sit down on that bench, and you shall have the reward and refreshment you have so honestly earned.”

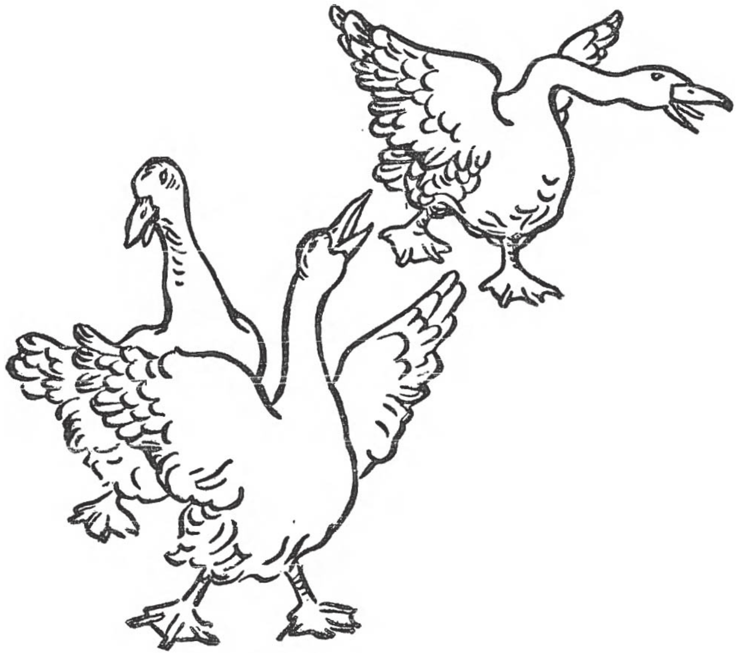
Then she turned to the goose-girl and said, “Go into the house, dearest daughter; it won’t do for you to be alone with a good-looking gentleman;

he might fall in love with you.”

Then the old woman went into the house too, and the youth fell asleep on the bench. After a while the old woman came and shook him.

“Get up,” she said. “You mustn’t stay here. I’ve given you a bad time of it, truly, but it hasn’t cost you your life. Here’s your reward.” She handed him a small box, carved out of an emerald.

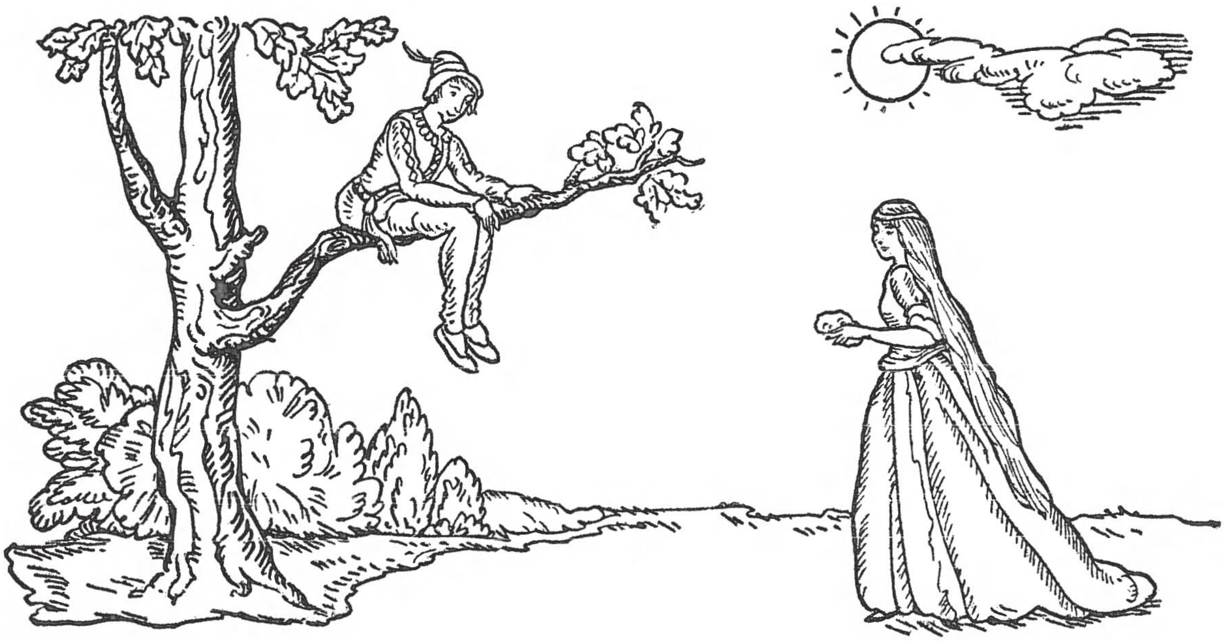
The Count sprang to his feet, conscious that his weariness had fled and that he was as strong and fit as ever. He thanked the old woman for her present, and without turning his head to get another glimpse of the fair daughter, he departed.



The Count wandered for three days before he found the way out of the wilderness. Then he came to a great town, and as no one knew him, he was led to the royal castle, where the King and Queen sat on the throne. The Count dropped on one knee, drew out the emerald box, and laid it at the feet of the Queen.

Immediately she ordered everyone to go away and leave her to have a private conversation with the stranger.

When the Queen was alone with him she began to cry bitterly. “What good is all this pomp and splendor when every morning I wake up full of care and sorrow? I have had three daughters, the youngest of whom was a miracle of loveliness. She was as white as snow, as pink as apple-blossom, and her hair shone like sunbeams. When she cried, she shed tears that were pearls and precious stones. The King, when she was fifteen years old, ordered all three daughters to come before the throne. You should have seen the admiration of the courtiers when the youngest came in; it was like the sun rising. The King said, ‘My daughters, I do not know when my end may come, but I will decide today what each of you shall have at my death. You all love me, but the one of you who loves me the most shall have the largest share.’ Each daughter said she loved him best. ‘Cannot you express,’ asked the King, ‘how much you love me, and then I shall be able to judge?’ The eldest said, ‘I love my father more than sweet honey’; the second, ‘I love my father more than my prettiest frock.’ But the youngest was silent. ‘And you, my dear child,’ asked her father, ‘how much do you love me?’ ‘I do not know,’ she answered, ‘and cannot compare my love with anything.’ But the King insisted that she must mention something. So she said at last, ‘The best dishes have no flavor without salt. I love my father as much as I love salt.’ When the King heard this answer he became furious, and said, ‘If your love for me resembles nothing better than salt, it shall be rewarded with salt.’ Thereupon he divided his kingdom between the two elder daughters, but the youngest, with a sack of salt tied to her back, was led into the wild forest by two servants and left there alone. Soon afterwards the King repented his severity and harshness, and sent people out to look for her in the forest, but she was nowhere to be found. Imagine my feelings when I opened the emerald box to see a pearl lying in it exactly like one of my daughter’s tears. Please tell me how you came by this treasure.”



When they heard his story, the King and Queen resolved to look up the old woman, for they naturally thought that where the pearl had come from news of their child might be found.

The old woman and the girl were sitting in the house in the wilderness, spinning.

At dusk something rattled the window and two fiery eyes glowered through the pane. It was an old screech-owl, and its “Tit-wit-hoo” made the old dame look up and say, “Now, daughter, it’s time. Go out to your work.”

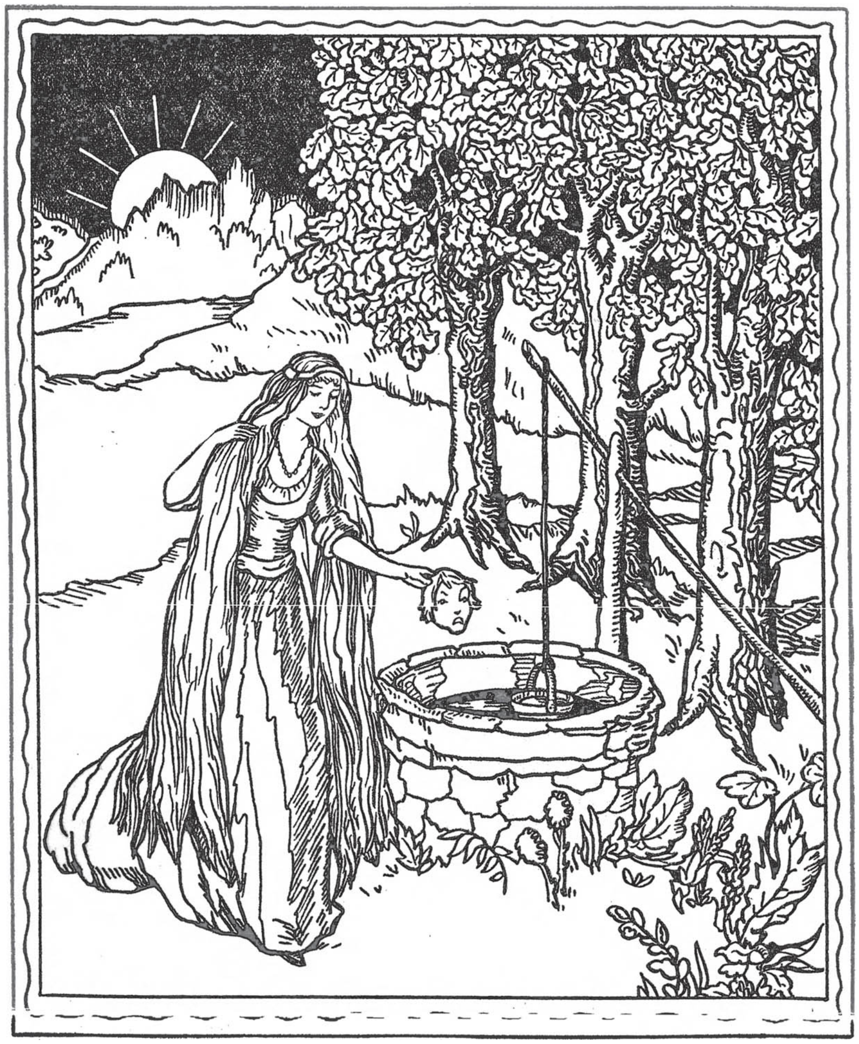
The daughter stood up and went out. Where did she go? Over the meadows, on and on till she came to the valley. She stopped by a well where three oak trees grew. The moon meanwhile had risen in a great silver ball over the mountains. It was so light you could have found a pin. The girl drew a mask from her face and began to wash in the well. When she had finished, she threw the skin she had washed off in the water and lay down on the grass to dry in the moonlight. You never saw such a transformation. Now she was as beautiful as sunlight.

But the beautiful maiden was sad; she sat down and cried bitterly, and one tear after another splashed through her hair on to the ground. There she sat, and would have sat a long time had not the bushes crackled and snapped behind her. Just then a black cloud covered the moon, and the girl again slipped into the old dark skin and disappeared out of the darkness into the house.

“Everything must be clean and tidy.” remarked the old woman, rising and beginning to sweep the room.

“But, mother,” said the girl, “why do you begin to work at such a late hour? What’s going to happen?”

“Have you not thought,” went on the old woman, “that it is three years today since you came to me? Your time is up; we cannot stay together longer.”



The Goose Girl Threw the Old Mask into the Well

The girl looked frightened, and said, “Oh, dear mother, don’t cast me out. Where shall I go?”

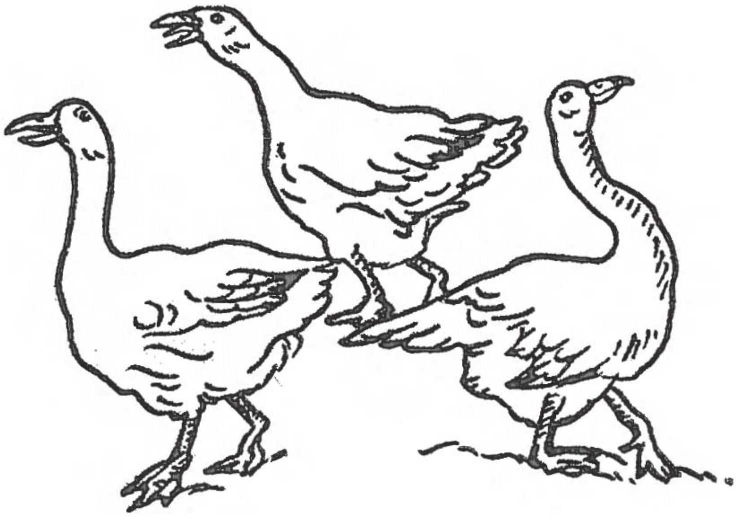
The old woman did not wish to reveal to the girl the fate in store for her. “I haven’t long to stay here,” she said, “but before I leave, the house must be cleaned thoroughly; so don’t interrupt me in my work. You needn’t be afraid. You will have a roof over your head, come what may, and the reward I am going to give you will be ample for your wants. Go to your room, wash off your dark skin, put on the silk dress you wore when you came here, and then wait till I call you.”

But now we must go back to the King and Queen, who, accompanied by the Count, had gone into the wilderness to look for the old woman. The Count got separated from them in the forest, and had to go on alone. The next day he thought he was on the right path, and walked on and on till night fell; then he climbed a tree where he intended to sleep, for he was afraid he might lose his way in the dark.

When the moon rose and lit up the landscape he saw a figure coming down the mountain. He recognized the same goose-girl (though she had no stick in her hand) that he had seen in the old woman's garden.

But how astounded was he when he saw the girl go to the well, take off her skin, wash, and let down her beautiful golden tresses! He had never seen anyone so beautiful in his life.

The minute she had vanished, the Count came down from the tree and followed the direction she had taken. He had not gone far before he saw the King and Queen, who had seen the light shining from the window of the old woman's house and were making for it. The Count told them of the wonderful transformation he had witnessed by the well, and they were sure the beautiful girl must be their lost daughter.



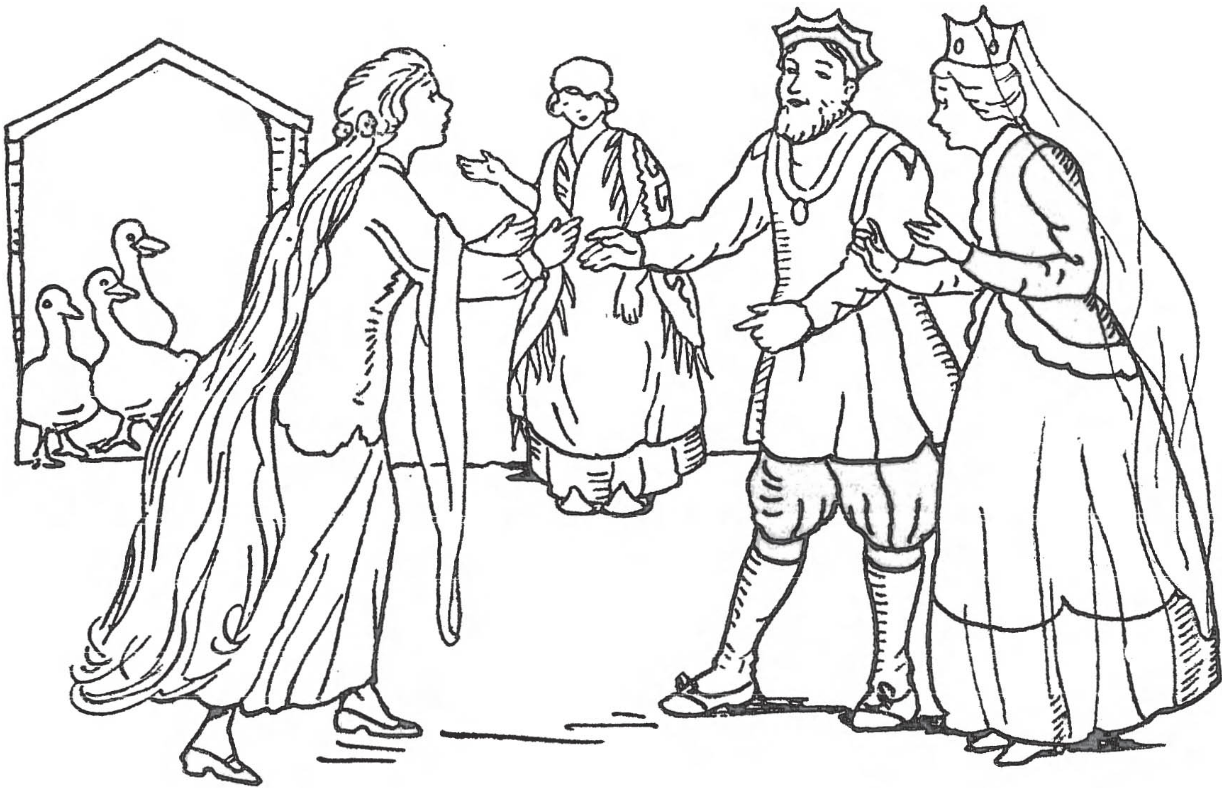
In great glee they continued on their way, and soon came to the old woman's little house and knocked.

The old woman appeared to expect them. She got up, and exclaimed in a friendly tone, “Come in, I know who you are!”

When they had walked into the parlor the old woman said, “You might have spared yourselves this long journey, if three years ago you had not unjustly spurned your child, who is so good and lovely. But you really did her no harm after all. For three years she has tended my geese, and in that time her pure heart has remained unsullied. But the anxiety you have suffered on her account has long ago punished you enough.”

Then she went to the bedroom door, and called, “Come out now, dear little one.”

The door opened, and the Princess appeared in her silken draperies, with her golden hair and shining eyes, and her complexion like apple blossoms. She embraced and kissed her father and mother, and all of them wept for joy.



The King then said, “My child, I have now bequeathed my kingdom to the others. What shall I give you?” “She needs nothing,” the old dame interposed. “I will give her the tears she has shed for you. They are priceless pearls, more beautiful than those found in the sea, and worth more than a hundred kingdoms. And in reward for her services I shall make her a present of my little house.”

As the old woman said this the walls creaked a little, and the old woman vanished before their eyes. On looking around, they saw the small dwelling had changed into a magnificent palace, and a long table stood ready laid, with servants bustling here and there.

There is more of the story, but my grandmother, who told it to me, did not have a good memory, and she had forgotten the rest. I have an idea that the beautiful Princess was married to the Count, and that they lived together in the fairy palace, happy and content.

THE GOLDEN BIRD

SOME time ago there was a King, who had a palace surrounded by most beautiful gardens, containing the rarest trees and shrubs. Among these was a tree which bore golden apples, which were all duly counted as they ripened; nevertheless, every morning one was missing. The King was informed of this, and he determined that every night a watch should be kept under the tree. The King had three sons, and as night drew on, he sent the eldest into the garden to watch the tree. Towards midnight he could no longer resist the sleep that was gradually stealing over his senses, and lay down under the tree. The next morning an apple was missing as usual.

The night following, the second son was set to watch, but he had no better success; when twelve o'clock struck he went to sleep and the apple was taken.

It was now the turn of the third son, who was very anxious to see what he could discover, but the King did not rely much upon him, and thought he would do even less than his brothers. However, as the youth was very eager, the King consented to his passing the night in the garden. The Prince accordingly took up his watch under the tree, but did not let himself fall asleep, and when twelve o'clock struck, he heard something rustling through the air, and looking up, saw by the moonshine that it was a bird flying towards him, whose feathers shone like gold. The bird alighted on the tree, and had just picked off an apple, when the Prince shot an arrow at it. The bird flew away, but the arrow had touched the feathers, and one fell to the ground. The youth picked it up, took it to the King the next morning, and related what he had seen during the night. The King assembled his council, and they all declared the value of such a feather to be greater than that of the whole kingdom. “If that be the case,” said the King, “one feather will not content me, but I must and will have the whole bird.”

When the King’s declaration was made public, the eldest son, relying upon his cleverness, instantly departed, certain that he would be back soon with the bird. He came to the edge of a wood, where he saw a fox sitting, and he instantly took aim at it.

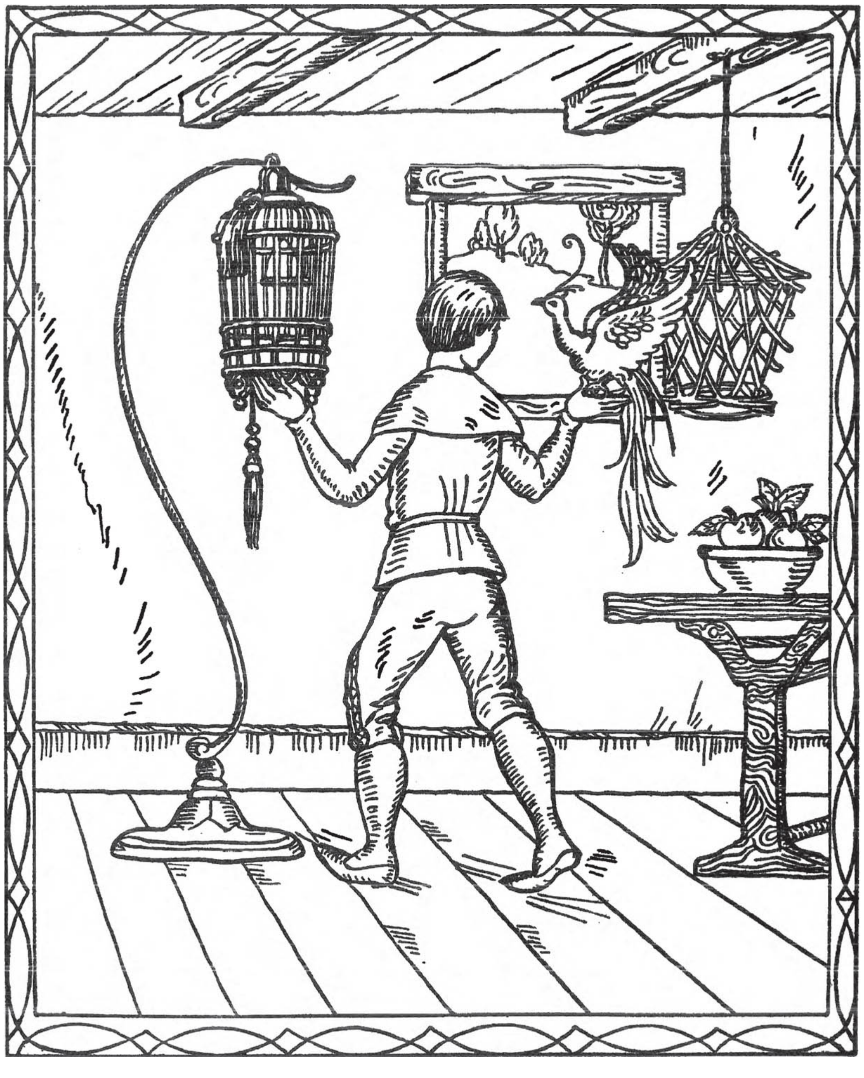
“Do not shoot me,” cried the creature, “and I will give you some good advice. You are seeking the golden bird, and will tonight arrive in a village where you will find two inns standing opposite each other, one lighted up and looking very cheerful, the other looking dull and deserted; but avoid the former, and take up your quarters at the other.

“How can such a stupid creature presume to offer me any advice?” the Prince asked himself, and fired, but he missed the fox, who turned his tail to the Prince, and ran quickly into the wood. Continuing his way, the King’s son came in the evening to the village, where he found the two inns described by the fox; people were singing and dancing in one, while nothing attractive was going on in the other.

“I should indeed be a simpleton,” said the Prince, “to enter such a miserable place, when something so much better presents itself.” So he went into the one that pleased him best, lived there in riot and enjoyment, and forgot everything a Prince ought to remember.

When some time had passed, and the eldest son did not return, the second decided to go in search of the bird, and thought he might discover some trace of his brother. Like the latter, he met the fox, and scorned the good advice he offered. Upon arriving at the village, he saw his brother standing at the window of the inn, from which loud sounds of mirth were coming. The brother called to the newcomer, who obeyed the invitation, went in, and fell readily into the gay life.

Again some time passed, but when no news of the Princes came, the youngest told the King he wished to go in search of the golden bird and his brothers. But the King refused, thinking, “He is less likely to find the bird than his brothers, and if any mischance were to overtake him, he would be so much less capable of dealing with it, for he is not clever at the best.”



He Decided to Put the Golden Bird into the Golden Cage

The Prince, however, gave his father no rest, so at last he consented and the Prince departed. Near the wood he encountered the fox, who begged for his life, and offered his advice. The youth was good natured, and said, “Be satisfied, little fox, I will do you no harm.”

“You shall not repent,” said the fox, “and so that you may travel more speedily, get up on my tail.”

As soon as the young man was seated, the fox began to run, and passed everything so rapidly, that the hair on his hide whistled in the wind. When they reached the village, the Prince alighted, followed the fox’s good advice, and without looking around, entered the mean-looking inn, where he rested very comfortably.

The next morning, when he came into the field, there was the fox again, who said, “I will tell you what you have to do next. Follow the road that lies straight before you, and you will arrive at a castle. You will see a whole troop of soldiers lying before it. Do not heed them, for they are all asleep, as you will discover by their snoring. Pass through them direct to the castle, which you will enter. After passing through all the rooms, you will at last arrive at the one where the golden bird is in a wooden cage. Near it stands a magnificent golden cage, but beware of taking the golden bird out of the wooden cage in order to put it in the golden one, or you will deeply regret it.”

After saying this, the fox stretched out his tail for the accommodation of the Prince, who, availing himself of it, sped along at the former rate.

When the youth arrived at the palace, he found it just as the fox had described; the Prince went into the chamber where the golden bird hung in his wooden cage. He saw a golden cage standing near, and the three golden apples were there also. It seemed to him ridiculous to leave the beautiful creature in the common wooden cage, while one so fitting to its bright hue stood by; so opening the door, the Prince seized it, and put it into the golden cage. At that moment the bird uttered a piercing cry, the soldiers awoke, rushed in, and took the intruder captive. He was led to prison, and the next morning he was placed before the judge, and, as he confessed all, was condemned to death. The King, however, consented to grant him his life upon one condition: that he bring the King a golden horse which was swifter than the wind. The King promised him, as a further reward, the golden bird.

As the Prince departed, he saw his old friend, the fox, sitting near the road. “Ah!” said the latter, advancing, “you see it has happened exactly as I told you. Why did you not heed my instructions?—but be of good cheer, I will tell you how you must proceed. Follow this road, and you will come to the palace where the horse now stands in the stable; the grooms will be on guard before the doors, but you will find them sleeping and snoring, and you may very deliberately proceed to lead away the golden horse. One thing, however, you must bear in mind, when you saddle him: do not take a golden saddle which hangs by the stall, but take one of common leather and wood, or it will be bad for you.” Everything occurred as the fox had said; the Prince came into the stable where the golden horse stood, but when he prepared to saddle him according to the fox’s directions, he thought to himself, “Such a saddle as this golden one is much more adapted to so beautiful an animal.” But he had hardly placed it on the horse’s back, than the animal began to neigh loudly; the grooms awoke at this, seized the young man, and cast him into prison, from whence he was led the following morning to be judged and condemned to death; though the king promised to grant him his life, and also the golden horse, if he would procure for him a beautiful Princess.

With a heavy heart, the youth departed on this new adventure, but fortunately soon met the faithful fox. “I should certainly abandon you to the fate you have so rashly provoked,” said the fox, “did I not feel compassion for you; however I will once more help you out of your difficulty. This road leads direct to a golden castle, and you will arrive there in the evening. At night, when all is quiet, the King’s beautiful daughter goes to the bath house to bathe. When she enters, spring forward and give her a kiss; she will then follow you, and you may lead her away—only do not permit her, on any account, to take leave of her parents.

Again the friendly fox extended his tail, the Prince took his place, and they proceeded at a rapid rate. When they arrived at the palace, everything was just as the fox had described it, and the young man waited until it was midnight, and all lay in profound sleep, save the Princess going to her bath. Springing up, the Prince gave the maiden a kiss, and she immediately expressed her readiness to follow him, entreating only to be allowed to say farewell to her parents. At first he withstood her prayers, but as she continued to weep, and fell at his feet to move his pity, he could resist no longer. The maiden, however, had scarcely reached her father’s bedside before he and all the others in the palace awoke, and the Prince was seized.

The next day the King said to him, “Your life must be forfeited, and you can obtain your pardon only by removing the hill which lies before my palace and obstructs my view. This must be done in eight days. If you succeed, my daughter shall be your reward.”

The young man, animated by the hope of obtaining the beautiful Princess, dug and shoveled away without intermission, but when he saw how little he had effected in seven days, his heart sank, and he gave up hope, for his labor had left scarcely any trace upon the hill. However, on the evening of the seventh day, the fox appeared, and said, “You deserve not that I should again interest myself in your affairs; nevertheless go away and take your rest—I will do this work for you.”

The next morning, when the young man awoke, he looked through the window—the fox had been true to his word, and the hill was gone. Full of joy, the Prince hastened to the king to announce the accomplishment of the prescribed task, and, willing or not, he was obliged to bestow his daughter upon the Prince.

The Prince and Princess now departed on their journey and before long the faithful fox came up. “You have truly the best part in your possession,” said he; “nevertheless the golden horse belongs to the lady of the golden palace.” “How shall I obtain it?” inquired the prince.

“When the King gives you the golden horse, mount it instantly and extend your hand to all, to bid them farewell, to the Princess last, and when you have her firmly by the hand, one spring will transfer her to you on the horse. She is then yours—for none could overtake you.”

All this was happily effected, and the Prince carried away both Princess and the golden horse. The fox accompanied him, and said, “I will assist you in obtaining the golden bird also; therefore when you approach the palace where the bird is, you must let the Princess alight, commit her to my care until your return, while you ride forward; when the golden horse enters the courtyard, great rejoicings will take place at the sight, and they will bring out the golden bird and deliver it to you. When you have the cage in your hand, gallop back to us, take up the Princess, and go on your way.”

This time the young man followed the fox’s directions exactly, and being very successful, prepared to return home with all his treasure; but the fox now put in his claim to be remembered, and asked the youth for a reward for the assistance he had given.

“Certainly,” replied the youth. “What do you require?”

“When we reach yonder wood, shoot me, and then cut off my head and my feet.”

“That would, indeed, be a bad way of showing my gratitude,” returned the prince, “and I could never do it.”

“Then,” rejoined the fox, “if you will not grant my request, I must leave you, but before I do so, I will give you one more piece of good advice. Avoid two things: do not purchase anything which is fit for the gallows, and never sit on the edge of a well.”

“What a strange creature!” thought the youth to himself. “He has such odd ideas! Who would ever think of buying anything fit for the gallows? And as to a well, I have never sat on the edge of one in my life!” Proceeding on his way with the beautiful Princess, the golden horse and the golden bird, he came to the village in which his brothers had stopped at the inn. There was a great commotion and noise, and as he passed through, the Prince inquired what was the cause of it. Some one replied that two men were about to be hanged. When he came to the place, he soon saw that these men were his brothers, who had foolishly squandered away their money, and left nothing to pay their debts. He asked if it would not be possible to obtain their freedom. So the Prince paid all of their obligations and being now free to go, the three brothers started on their way together. They arrived at the wood where the fox had met them first of all, and finding it cool and pleasant, the two brothers proposed to rest there for a while in the shade, on the edge of a well, and to eat the lunch they had brought. During the conversation that ensued, the youngest Prince, forgetting himself, and suspecting no evil, seated himself on the edge of the well. The wicked brothers, who had been looking for such an opportunity, instantly pushed him backwards into it, and taking the Princess, the horse, and the bird, went on their way.

"Father," said they, "we not only bring you the golden bird you wished for, but we have also obtained the golden horse and this fair Princess."

This caused great rejoicing, until it was found that the horse would not eat, nor the bird sing, and the beautiful Princess did nothing but weep.

The youngest brother, however, was not killed, for the well was fortunately dry, and he fell upon some soft moss; but he could not get out. In this difficulty, the faithful fox did not forsake him, but hastened to him, reproaching him for disregarding his advice. “But I cannot leave you here,” said he.

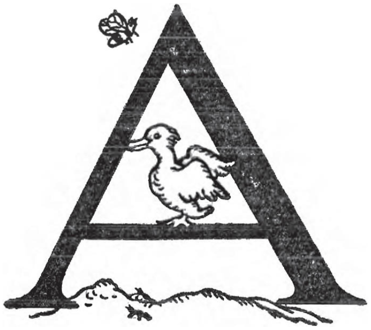
Bidding him seize his tail firmly, he drew him up. “You are not yet out of danger,” said the fox, “for your brothers, not feeling sure of your death, have surrounded the wood with sentinels, whose orders are to kill you the instant you appear.” A poor man was sitting by the roadside, and the Prince exchanged clothes with him, and in this safe disguise reached his father’s palace. No one recognized him in his tattered clothing; yet as soon as he set foot within the palace, the bird began to sing, the horse to eat, and the Princess ceased to weep.

“What can this signify?” asked the King.

The Princess answered, “I do not know; just now I felt so melancholy, and suddenly my sorrow is gone; I feel as if my bridegroom has arrived.” Then she related to the King all that had happened, although the brothers had threatened her with death, if she betrayed them. The King ordered everyone in the palace to appear before him. Among them came the young Prince, still in the ragged dress he had taken from the poor man. The beautiful Princess recognized him instantly, and embraced him tenderly. The wicked brothers were seized and placed in prison cells, from which they were shortly afterwards led to be put to death; the young Prince was betrothed to the Princess, and declared heir to his father’s kingdom.

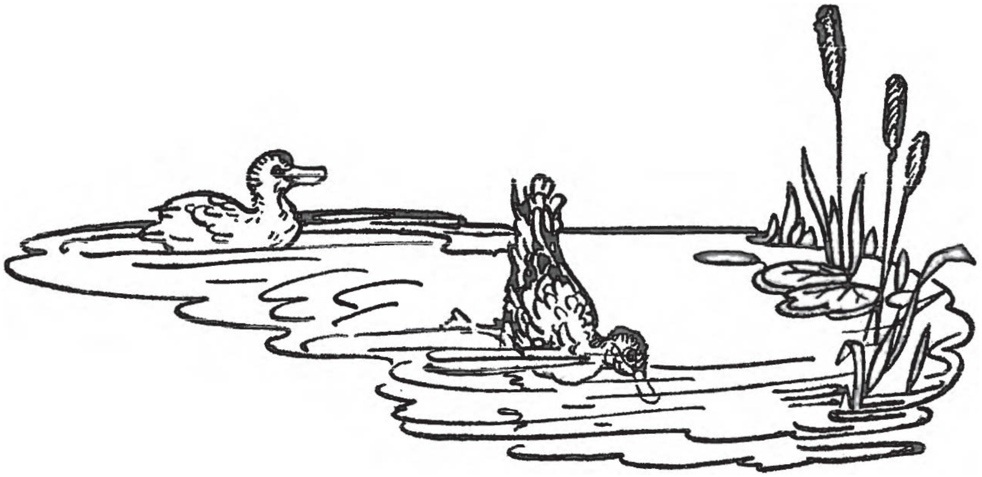
Now, how did the poor fox fare? Long afterwards, the King’s son, being again in the wood, was met by the fox, who said to him, “You now have all your heart could wish for, but my misfortunes are apparently never to cease, and yet it is in your power to do me a great service.” Again he so earnestly begged that the Prince would shoot him, and cut off his head and his feet, that the latter no longer refused. As soon as it was done, the fox was transformed into a human being, who was none other than the brother of the fair Princess, now the Prince’s wife. He was thus released from the power of an enchantment.

THE QUEEN BEE



A KING once had two sons who were considered clever; yet they wasted their time and money in worthless foolishness, and were scarcely ever at home. They had a younger brother, whom they called stupid because he was quiet and simple, and they used to make fun of him, and say that such a simpleton as he would never fight his way through the world, for they, with all their cleverness, found it a very difficult matter.

One evening, however, they took him for a walk with them. On their way they approached an ant hill, and the two elder brothers wanted to overturn the hill that they might see the little ants running and creeping about in their fright, and carrying their eggs away to a place of safety. But the simpleton said, “No, no, leave the little creatures in peace, I do not like to see them disturbed.”



The brothers gave in to him, and they went on quietly till they came to a lake on which a large number of ducks were swimming, and the brothers wished to catch one or two of them for roasting, but the simpleton said, “Leave the poor birds in peace; I cannot endure that you should kill any of them.”

So the ducks were left to live, and the three brothers walked on again till at length they came to a bees’ nest in a tree, with so much honey that it ran over on the trunk. The two brothers wanted to light a fire under the tree to smother the bees, so that they might take away the honey, but the younger brother held them back. “Leave the poor insects in peace,” he said. “I cannot bear to think of their being burned.”

Again they listened to him, stupid as they thought him, and the bees’ nest was left unmolested.

The three brothers walked on till they came to a castle which was beautifully furnished, but which seemed to be deserted. In the stable stood horses of pure stone.

They went all over the rooms and through the castle till they reached a door to which were three locks. The center of this door was glass, through which one could see into the room.

The brothers looked into the room and saw a very old man sitting at a table. They called to him more than once, but he did not hear till they called a third time. Then he rose up, opened the three locks, and came out. Even then he uttered not a word, but led them to a richly prepared table, and motioned that they were to sit down and eat. After they had eaten and drunk as much as they wished, the little man allowed them to remain all night, and sleep in his own chamber.

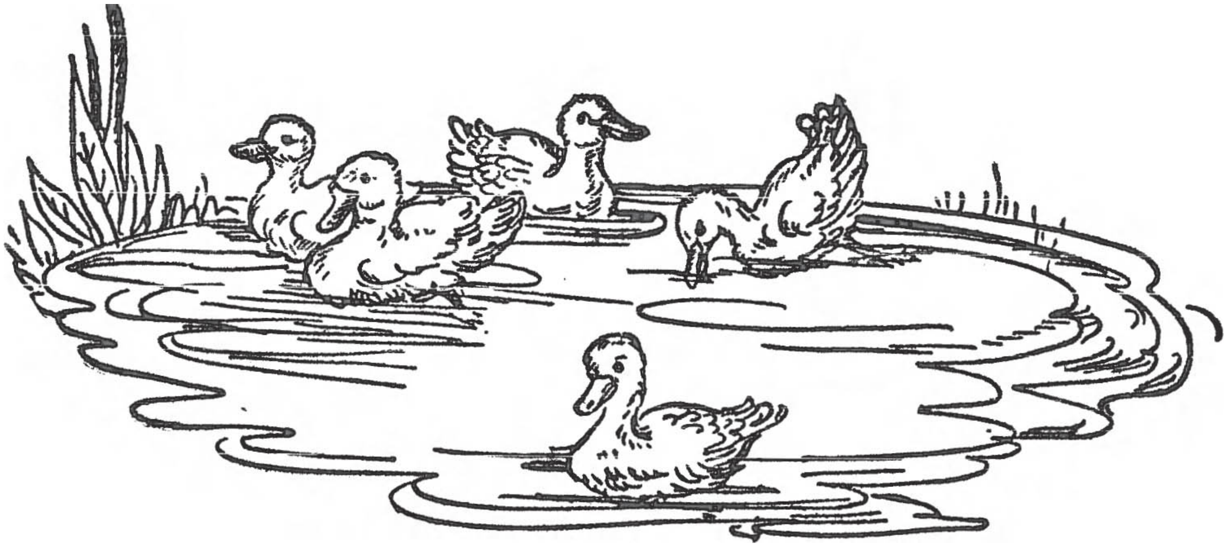
The next morning the gray old man came to the eldest brother, made signs to him to follow, and led him to a stone table, on which were engraved three sentences, the first in the following words: “In the wood under the moss are scattered the pearls of the King’s daughter. They are a thousand in number, and whoever can find them all in one day before the sun goes down will release the castle from its enchantment; but if he should search and not succeed before sunset, he will be turned into stone.”

The eldest brother read these words, and deter mined to try. He went to the wood full of confidence, for he was sure that the task would be easy for one so clever. He searched for the whole day, but when the hour of sunset arrived, he had found only a hundred pearls, and according to the writing on the table, he was turned into stone.

Notwithstanding this, the second brother made an attempt, for he was sure that he would find all the pearls, even though his brother had failed. He began his task in the evening, so that he searched all night, but with very little more success than his brother. By sunset next day he had found only two hundred pearls; he was therefore turned into stone.

At last came the turn of the simpleton to seek among the moss, but he had no confidence in himself, and he was so miserable at having to find the pearls that he went very sadly, and when he reached the place, sat down on a stone and wept. As he sat there weeping he saw coming toward him the ant king, whose kingdom and life he had saved, with five thousand of his ants.

“What is your trouble?” asked the ant king, and when the simpleton had told his story, the ant king said, “Do not be downcast. You once saved our home and now we will be glad to help you.”

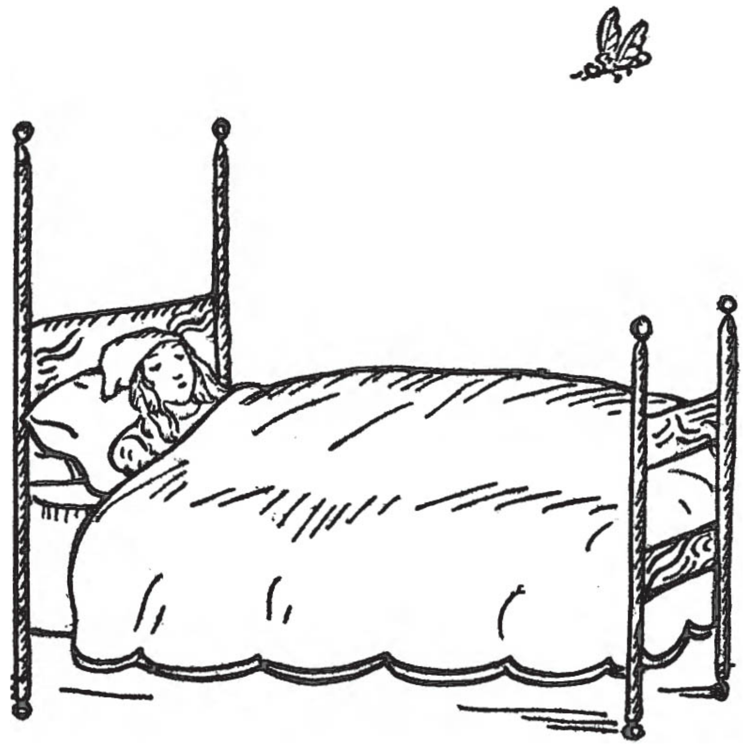


The ants set to work and it was not long before they had found all the pearls and piled them up in a large heap. Then they went home, scarcely waiting for his thanks; they had only intended to show their gratitude.

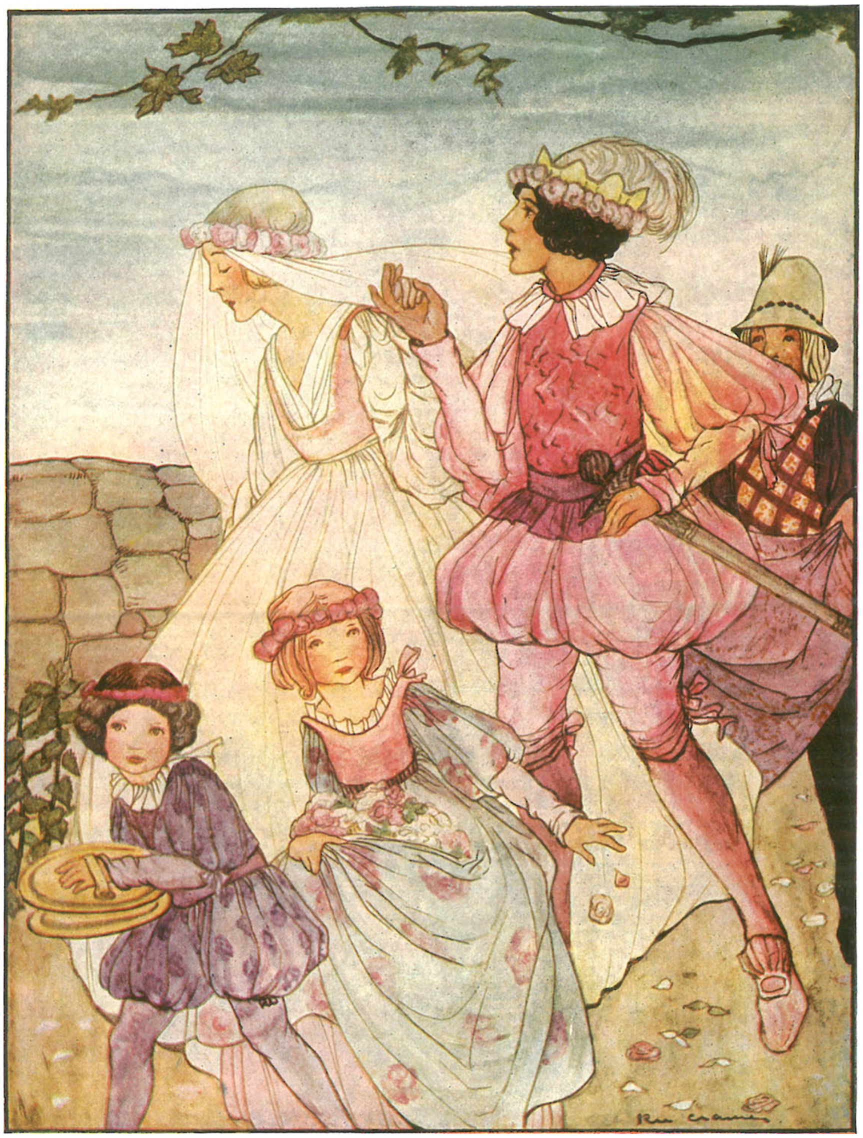
The poor simpleton was quite overjoyed; but on returning to the castle, he found a second task awaiting him. It was to fetch the key of the Princess’ sleeping chamber from the bottom of the lake into which it had been thrown; so the simpleton went to the shore of the lake, wondering what he should do. As he stood there in despair, some ducks swam to his feet and asked him what the trouble was. They were the ducks whose lives he had saved, and no sooner had he told them his story than they dived to the bottom and in a few moments brought up the key and gave it to him.

There was still another task to perform, and the most difficult of all. He had to go into the room where the King’s three daughters were sleeping, find out which was the youngest and the most beloved, and wake her.

The sentence on the stone table stated that the sisters exactly resembled each other; the only thing by which they could be distinguished was that, before they went to sleep, the eldest had eaten barley sugar, the second a little syrup, and the youngest honey. This was a difficult task, indeed, but in the midst of the youth’s trouble, in came the queen bee, whose community he had saved from the fire. She went to the mouths of the three sleepers and quickly discovered by the breath of the youngest that she had eaten honey. She alighted on the girl’s mouth, and the youth knew by this which of the King’s daughters to awaken. No sooner had he done so than all resumed their proper forms.

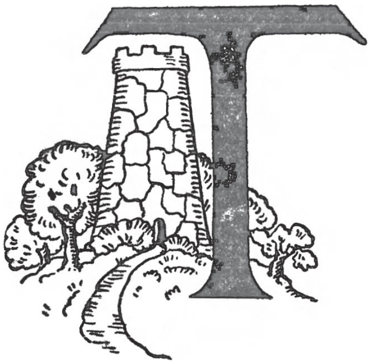


The simple brother married the youngest daughter of the King, and became King after her father’s death. His brothers married her two sisters.



THE PRINCE TOOK HER BY THE HAND AND LED HER TO CHURCH

PRINCESS MALEEN



THERE was once a King who had only one son, and he fell in love with the daughter of another mighty King. Her name was Princess Maleen. She was very beautiful. Her father wished her to marry a Prince to whom he had promised her when she was very young, but Princess Maleen told her father that she would not marry anyone else but the son of the neighboring King. They loved each other so dearly that they could not be separated.

On hearing this her father fell into a great rage and ordered a dark tower to be built, into which not a sunbeam nor a ray of moonlight could penetrate. When it was finished, he said to his daughter: “You shall be shut up in that tower for seven years, and then I will come and see if your stubborness is not cured.”

Provisions to last for the seven years were stored in the tower, and then the Princess and her maid were led into it, walled up, and cut off at once from heaven and earth, and there they had to remain in total darkness, unable to distinguish the day from night.

The Prince went often to the tower and called the Princess by name, but no sound could penetrate those thick walls, and what could she do but weep and complain?

Time passed on, and by the decrease in the provisions the Princess knew that the seven years were coming to an end. She supposed the hour of her release was at hand, but no stroke of a hammer was heard, no stone fell from the walls, and it seemed as if her father had forgotten her.

Finding no change, and knowing that their provisions would not last much longer, Princess Maleen and her maid realized that a terrible death threatened them. “We must not give up yet,” said the Princess. “I think we might try to break through the walls in some way.” She took up the bread knife as she spoke and dug and scraped at the mortar between the stones for a long time, and when she was tired, the maid took her place.

After working very hard they managed to displace one stone, then a second, and a third, and in three days the first ray of light fell upon the darkness, and at last there was an opening large enough for them to look through. The sky was blue, and the fresh air that came into the tower had a sweet fragrance. But how sad everything appeared to the Princess! Her father’s castle lay in ruins, the towns and villages around it, as far as one could see, were burned. The fields, far and wide, had been laid waste, and not a living soul could be seen.

They continued to work till the opening in the wall was large enough for a person to creep through. Then the maid jumped through, and the Princess Maleen quickly followed her. Yet, now that they were free, they knew not which way to wend their steps, for an enemy had evidently destroyed the whole country, driven away the King, and slain all the inhabitants. They wandered on for some time, in hopes of reaching another country, but they found neither a shelter nor a human being to offer them a bit of bread; so great was their hunger that they were glad to eat stinging-nettle stalks to quench it.

After wandering about for a long time they came at last to another land, and there they begged to be taken as servants, but wherever they knocked they were refused, and no one would pity them. At last they arrived at a large town, and went at once to the King’s court. But even here they were told to go away, till the cook said she would take one of them to help her in the kitchen; so the Princess Maleen remained to become a Cinderella.

Imagine her surprise to find, after a time, that the King in whose castle she now worked as a servant was the father of her former lover, and that he had chosen for his son another bride, who was ugly in countenance and wicked at heart. The marriage was to take place very soon, as the Prince was already betrothed to the ugly maiden.

But she hid her great ugliness from every eye, and shut herself up in her own room, only allowing the kitchen maid to see her; so the Princess Maleen had to wait upon the ugly bride of her own lover.

The day arrived at last in which the bridegroom was to go with his bride to church, but she was so ashamed of her ugliness, and so afraid that the people in the street would point at her and make fun of her, that she sent for Maleen and said to her: “I have had a great misfortune and sprained my foot, therefore I cannot go out today, but if you will put on the bridal dress and take my place, it will be a great honor for you.”

But the Princess Maleen replied: “I wish for no honor that does not rightly belong to me!”

The bride then offered her gold, but it was all in vain, she still refused to go.

At last the ugly maiden got angry, and said, “If you will not obey me, it shall cost you your life, for I have only to say the word, and your head will lie at my feet!”

The Princess Maleen, being known in the castle only as the kitchen maid, was now obliged to obey. She dressed herself in the bride’s clothes and put on the bride’s jewels and ornaments.

When she entered the royal reception room, everyone was astonished at her great beauty, and the king said to his son:

“That is the bride I have chosen for you, and whom you must lead to the church.”

The bridegroom, who had heard that his bride was plain, felt rather surprised, and said to himself, “She is like my Princess Maleen, and I should believe it was she, if I did not know she had been shut up in the tower, and no doubt is dead.”

However, he took her by the hand, and led her to church.

As they sat in the carriage together he noticed that she looked thoughtful and sad, and he asked her if she was unhappy.

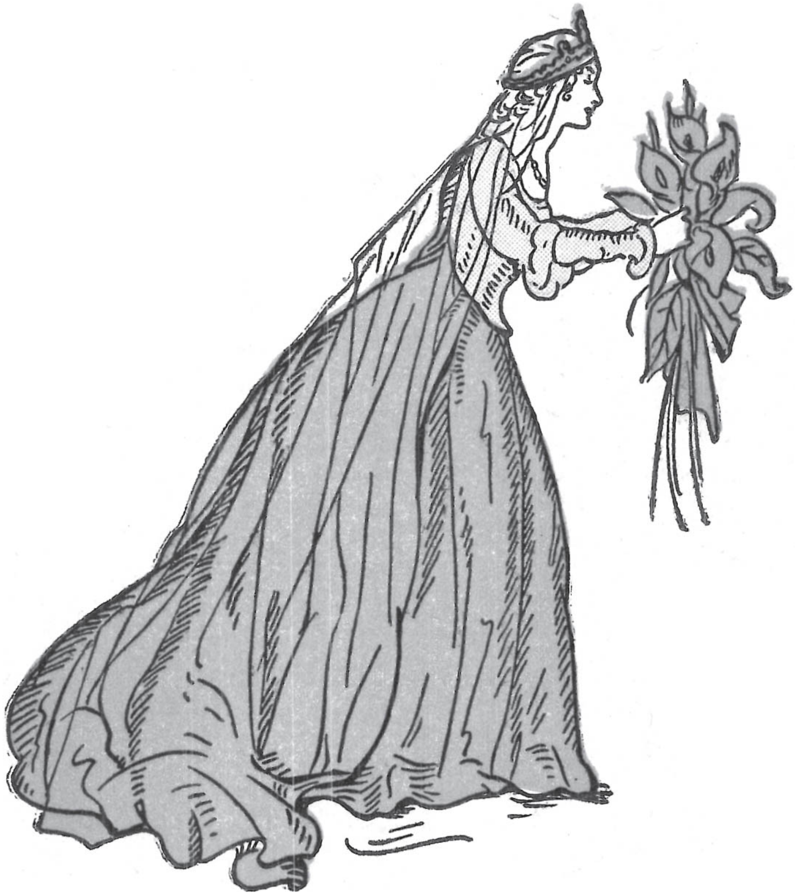
“No,” she replied, “but I was thinking of the Princess Maleen.”

The Prince did not reply, but he wondered very much that his bride should know that name.

Presently he asked her, “Do you know the Princess Maleen?”

“How should I know her?” she replied.

As they approached the church, he threw round her neck a costly chain of gold, and fastened it with a gold clasp. Then they entered the church, and stood at the altar while the priest joined their hands and married them in a splendid ceremony.



During their ride back to the castle the Princess spoke not one word the whole way, and when she arrived, she hastened to the chamber of the bride, took off the rich dress and ornaments, and dressed herself in her old gray gown and kirtle. She kept nothing but the gold chain which the Prince had given her.

The ugly bride then arrayed herself in the elegant bridal clothes, and throwing a thick veil over her face, went to join the company at the marriage feast.

As soon as the guests were departed, the bridegroom said, “Where is the chain that I gave you at the church today?”

“What chain?” she answered. “You gave me no chain.”

"I placed it round your neck myself," he said, "and fastened it; therefore if you know nothing about it, you are not my right bride."

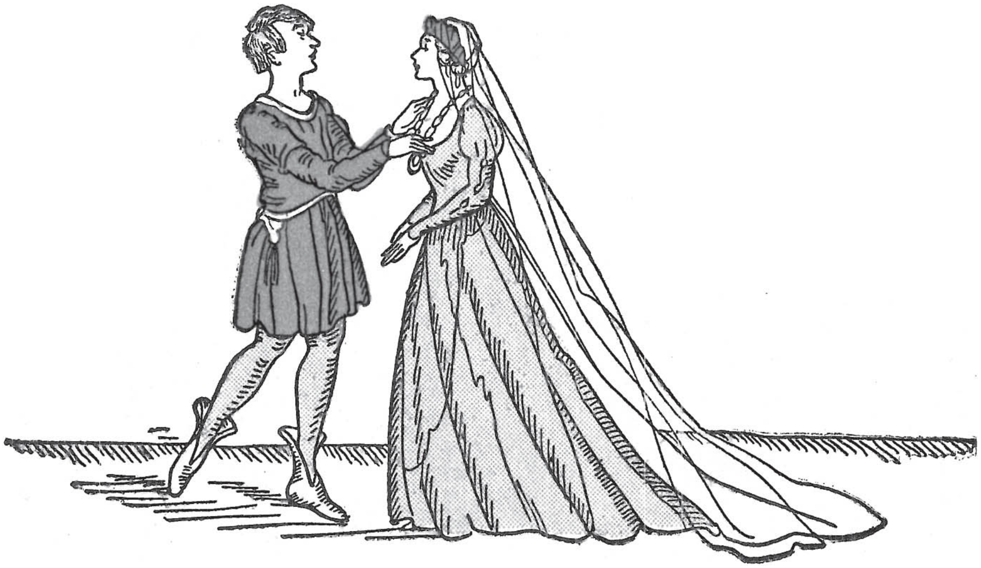
He pulled the veil from her face as he spoke, and her remarkable ugliness made him start back with surprise and fright, exclaiming, "Who are you? What are you doing here?"

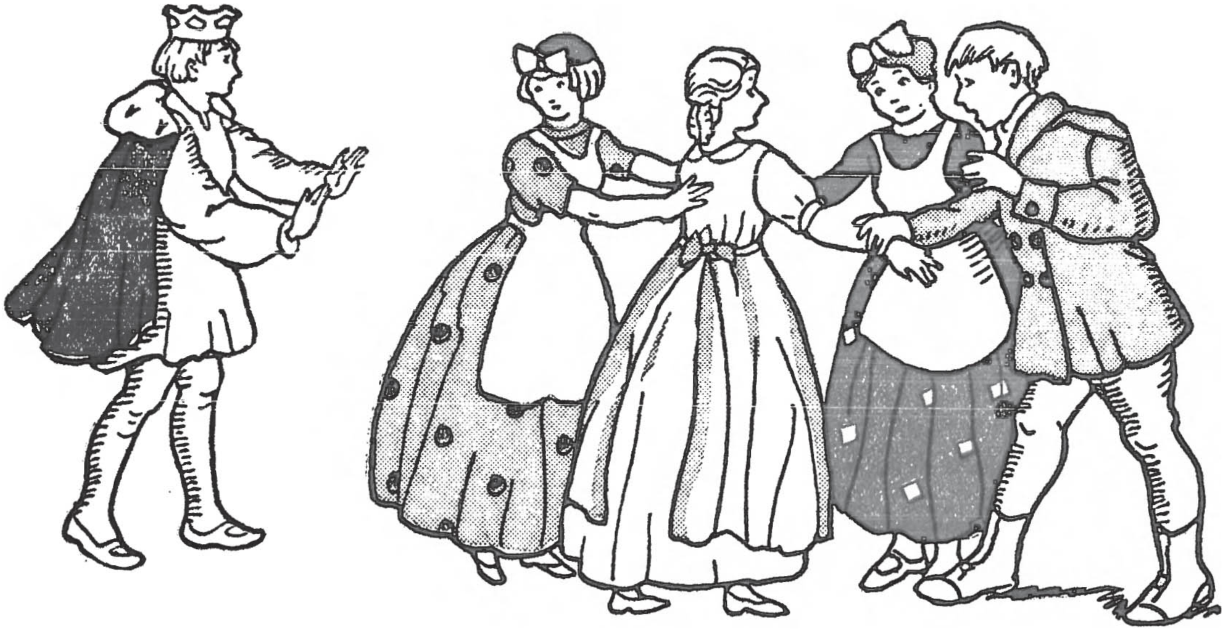
"I am your real bride," she said, "the one whom the King, your father, chose for you, but as I feared the people might mock me today, I told the kitchen maid to dress in my clothes, and be proxy for me at the church."

"Where is that maiden?" he asked. "I must see her. Go and fetch her here!"

"This shall cost her her life," she thought, as she went out in a great rage, and said to the servants, "That kitchen girl is an impostor! Take her out into the court, and cut off her head!"

The servants caught hold of the poor girl, and would have dragged her away, but she screamed so loudly that the Prince heard her voice. He hastened out of his chamber, and ordered that the maiden should be instantly set free. When she came into the light of the lamps, he noticed on her neck the sparkle of the gold ornament he had given her.





“This is the right bride,” he said, “who went with me to the church,” and as he spoke he led her away from the large crowd.

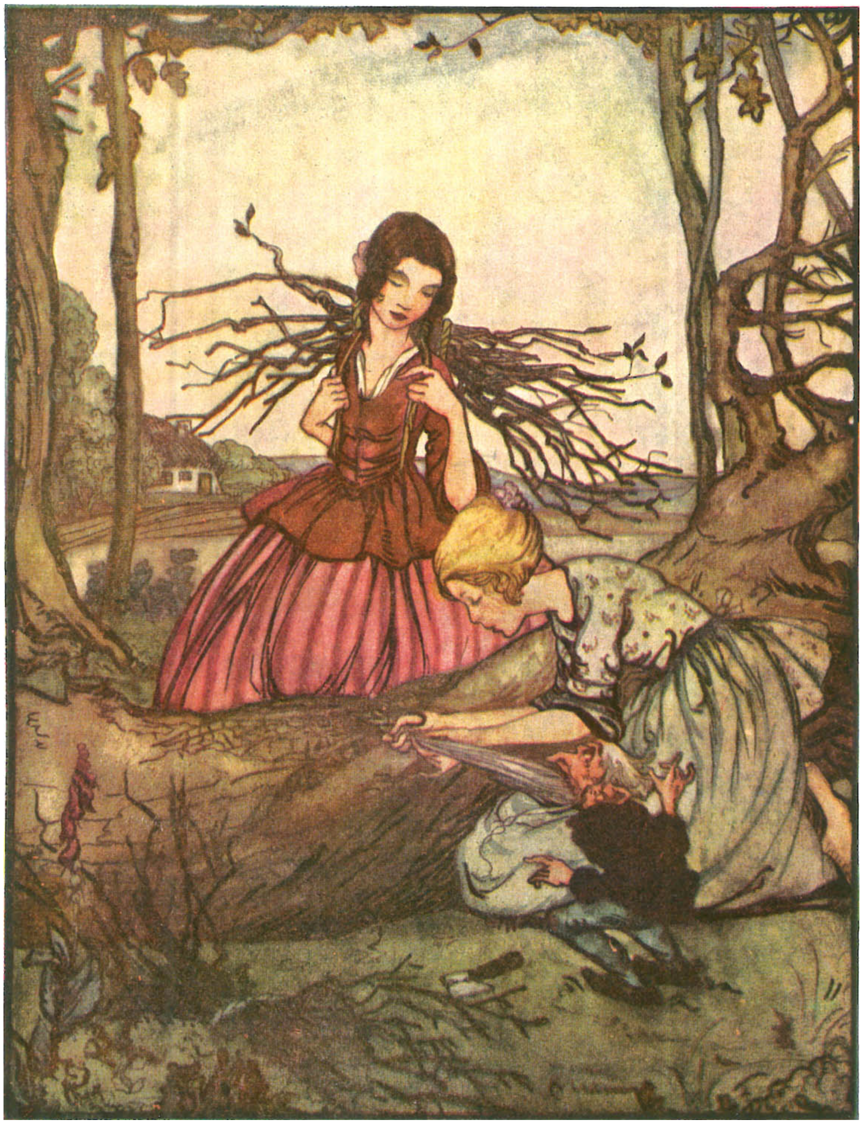
When they were alone he said to her, “On the road to church you mentioned the name of the Princess Maleen, who was once my own beloved bride. If I thought it possible, I should say she stood before me, for you resemble her in every way.”

“I am the Princess Maleen,” she said. “I was shut up for seven years in a dark tower. I have suffered hunger and thirst, and sorrow and poverty, and I came to this castle to earn my bread by service. While here, I found it was your home, and that you were going to marry another; I should have remained silent always if your bride had not sent me with you to the church. It was I whom you married today at the altar, and I am your real bride; if you still love me, it will be sunshine indeed after all the dark days that are past.”

“I do still love you,” he said, as he took her in his arms and kissed her.

The next day the ugly bride was sent home to her father’s house, and from that moment the Princess Maleen and her husband lived in great happiness for the rest of their lives.

The tower in which the princess was inclosed is still standing, and the children play round it, and sometimes in whispers tell each other the story of Princess Maleen.



“DON’T BE IMPATIENT,’ SAID SNOW-WHITE, “I WILL HELP YOU”

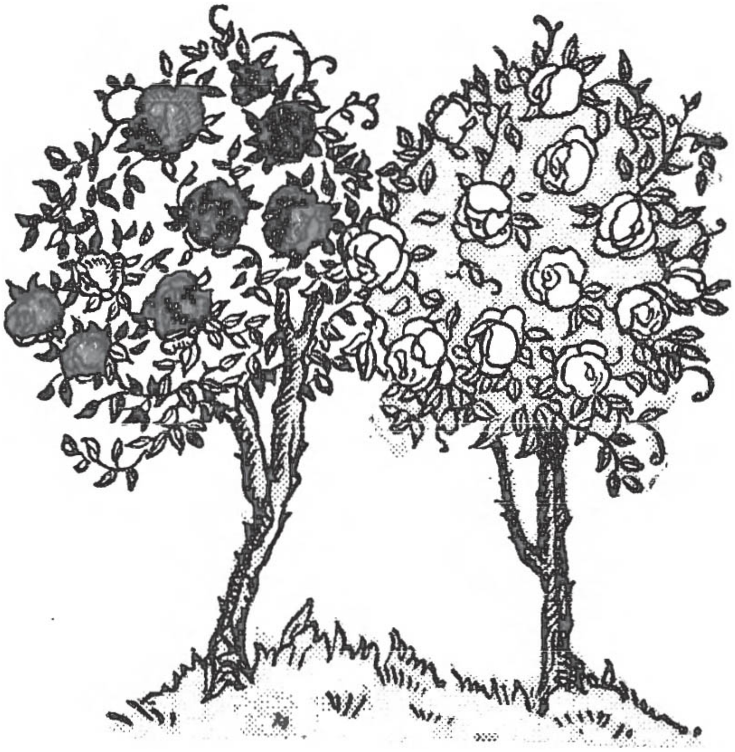
SNOW-WHITE AND ROSE-RED

ONCE upon a time there lived in a lonely cottage, surrounded by a garden, a poor widow. In the garden grew two rose trees, one of which bore white roses, the other red.

Now, the widow had two daughters, who so much resembled the rose bushes that she gave to one the name of Snow-White, and to the other, Rose-Red.

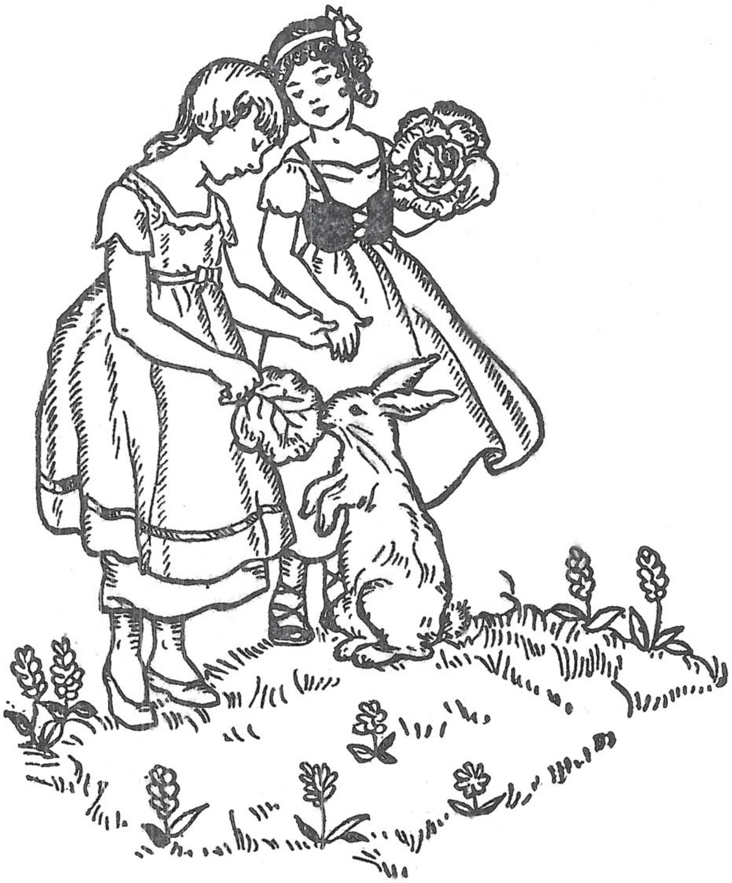
These two children were the best, the most obedient, and most industrious children in the world; yet they differed in some respects. Snow-White was quiet and gentle, Rose-Red fond of running about the fields and meadows in search of flowers and butterflies.

Snow-White would often stay at home with her mother, help her with the house work, and then read to her after it was done. The two children were very fond of each other, and whenever they walked out together they would hold each other’s hands, and when Snow-White would say, “We will never leave each other,” her sister would always reply lovingly, “No, never, as long as we both live.”

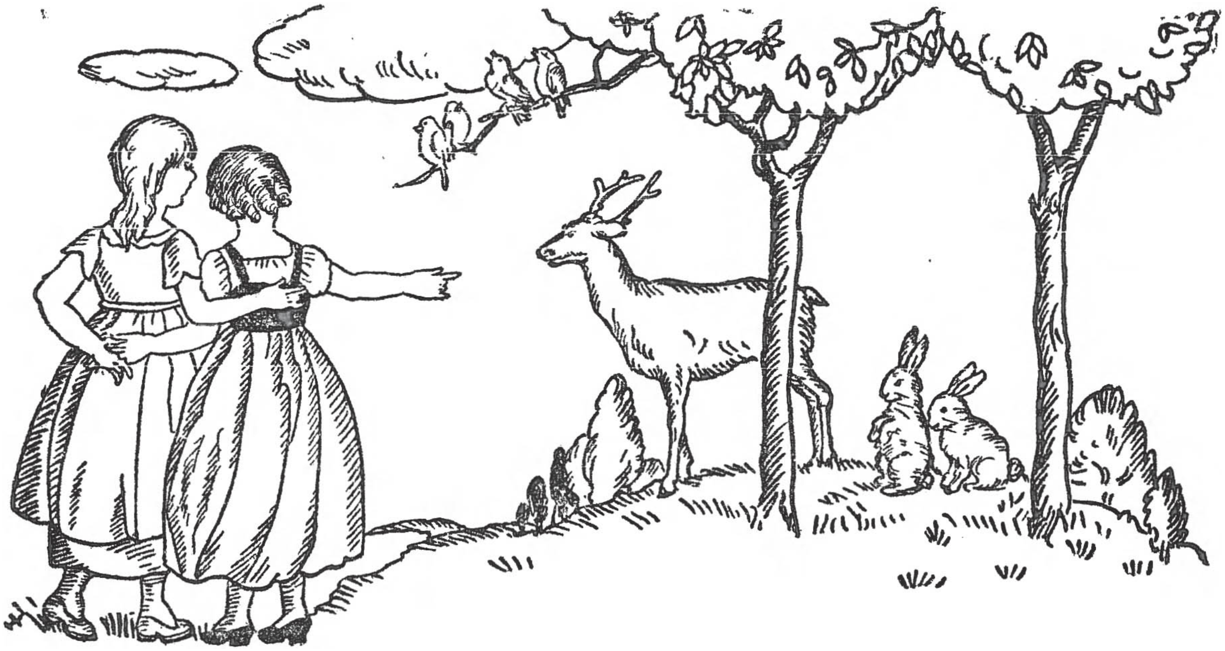


The mother encouraged this; she would often say, “Whatever nice things are given to either of you must be shared with the other,” and the sisters always did so.

They frequently rambled together alone in the wood to gather berries; but not a creature ever did them any harm, although wild animals often passed them; they seemed to have such confidence in the sisters that they were quite friendly with them.



The little hares would eat cabbage leaves out of their hands, the deer would graze by their sides, the stag bound merrily near, while the birds would remain sitting and singing on the branches.



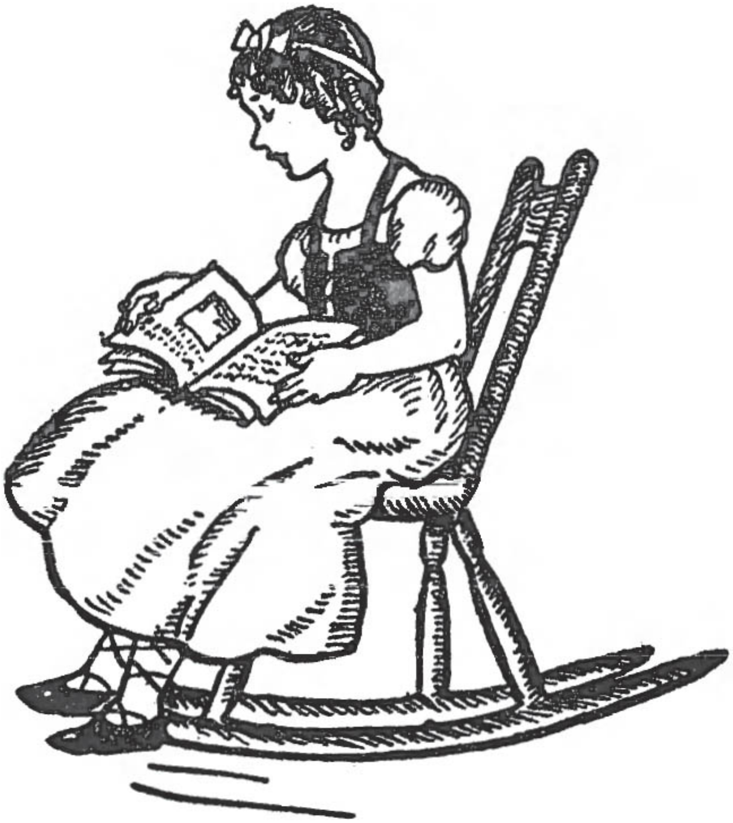
No danger ever threatened them, even if they stayed in the forest till late, or after nightfall. They would lie down on the mossy bed and sleep safely till morning, and their mother knew there was no cause for fear.

Once, when they had remained in the wood all night, they did not awake till the rising sun had reddened the eastern sky, and, as they opened their eyes, they saw near them a beautiful little child, whose clothes were white and shining. When he saw they were awake, he looked kindly at them, and, without a word, vanished from their sight.

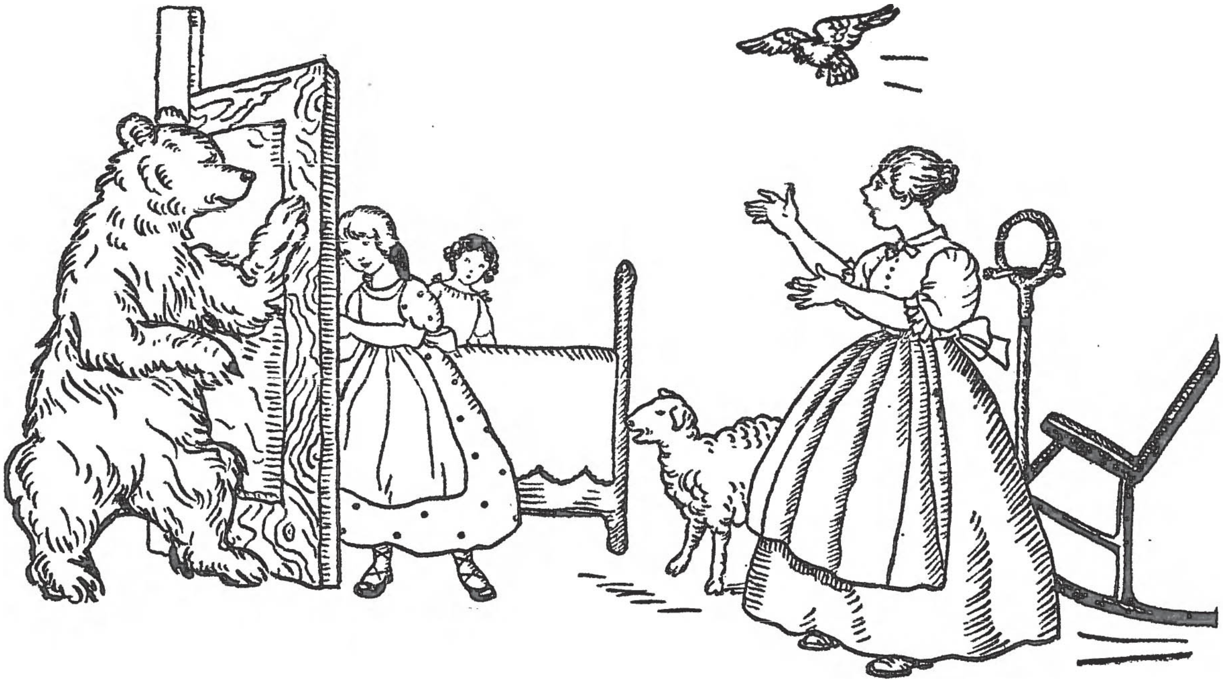
On rising they found that they had been sleeping on the edge of a steep rock, down which they would have fallen if they had moved in the dark. When they told their mother, she said it must have been one of the guardian angels who watch over good children.

Snow-White and Rose-Red kept their mother’s cottage so neat and clean that it was quite a pleasure to look at it. Every morning in summer Rose-Red took care always to place a bouquet of fresh flowers by her mother’s bed, in which was a flower from each of the rose trees. In winter Snow-White lighted the fire, filled the kettle, and placed it over the bright blaze, where it shone and glittered like gold; for it was of burnished copper, and was always kept bright and polished.

In the evening, when the snow was falling, and the door closed and locked, they would seat themselves round the fire in the bright, snug little room, and knit busily, while their mother would put on her spectacles, and read to them out of the Good Book.



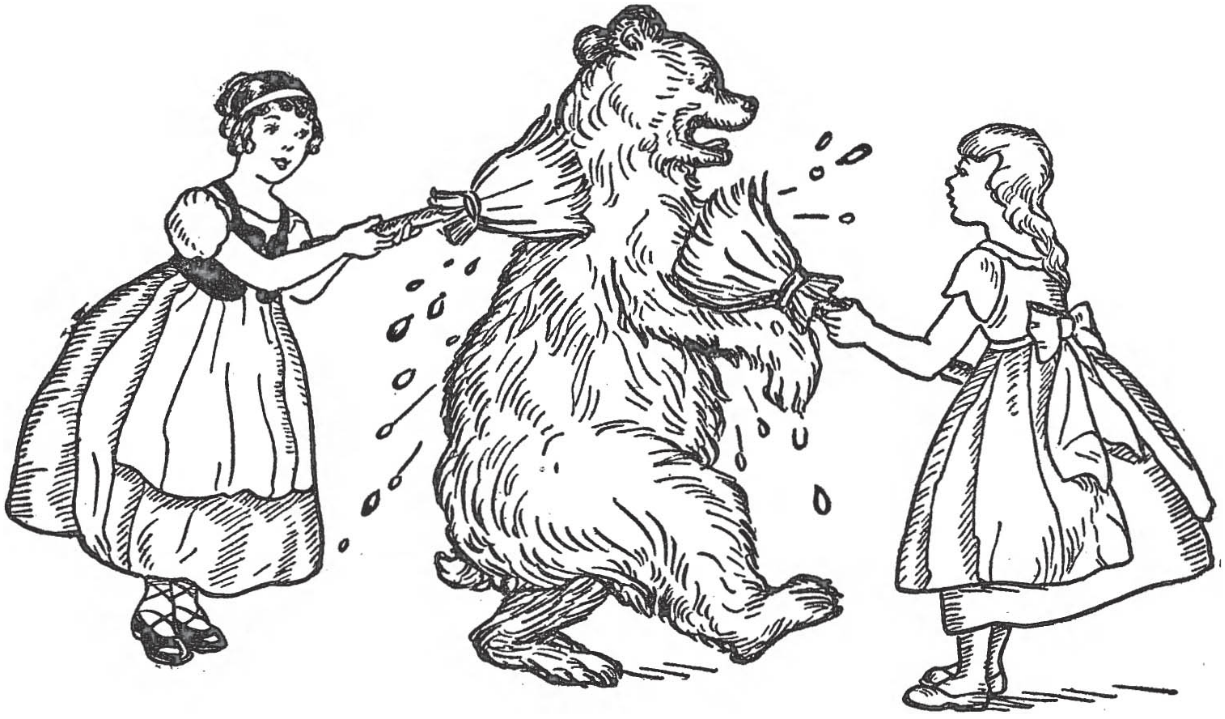
One evening they were sitting in this peaceful happiness, with a pet lamb sleeping on the hearth near them, and above them, on a perch, a white dove, with its head behind its wing.



Presently came a knock at the door, and the mother said, “Rose-Red, open it quickly; no doubt some poor traveler, lost in the snow, wants shelter.” Rose-Red hastened to obey; but on opening the door, instead of the poor man she expected to see, a great bear pushed his huge black head into the room.

Rose-Red screamed aloud, and started back; the lamb bleated; the dove flew wildly about the room; and Snow-White hid herself behind her mother’s bed.

The bear, however, began to speak very gently. “Do not fear,” he said, “I will not hurt you. I only want to warm myself by your fire, for I am half frozen.”



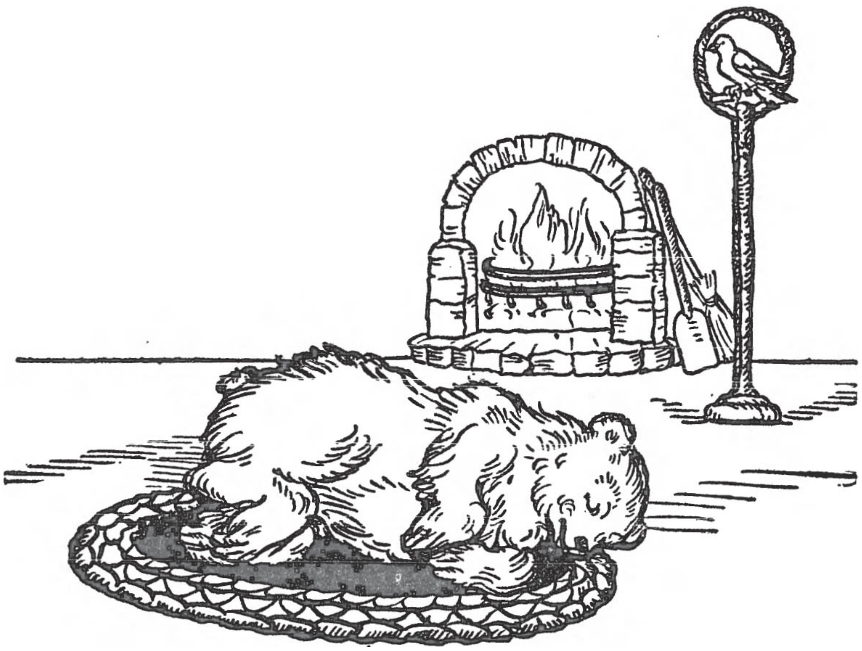
“Poor bear!” said the mother. “Come in and lie down by the fire if you want to; but take care not to burn your furry coat.”

Then she called out, “Snow-White and Rose-Red, come here. The bear is quite gentle; he will do you no harm.”

So they both came near to the fire; and, by degrees, the dove and the lamb got over their fright, and settled themselves to sleep. Presently, when the bear was warmer he said in a gentle voice, “Dear children, will you sweep off the snow from my black fur coat?”

So they got the broom, and cleaned the bear’s skin, till it looked quite smooth, and then he stretched himself at full length before the fire, grunting now and then to show how contented and comfortable he felt. In a very short time they lost all fear of their unexpected guest, and even began to play with him. They jumped on his back, rolled him over on the floor, and tapped him with a hazel twig, pulled his thick fur, and when he growled they only laughed. The bear allowed them to do as they liked, only saying, when they were too rough with him, “Leave me my life, dear children, and don’t quite kill your old sweetheart.”

When bedtime came, the mother said to him, “You can stay here by the fire all night if you like. I will not turn you out in this dreadful weather, and here you will at least be sheltered from the cold.”



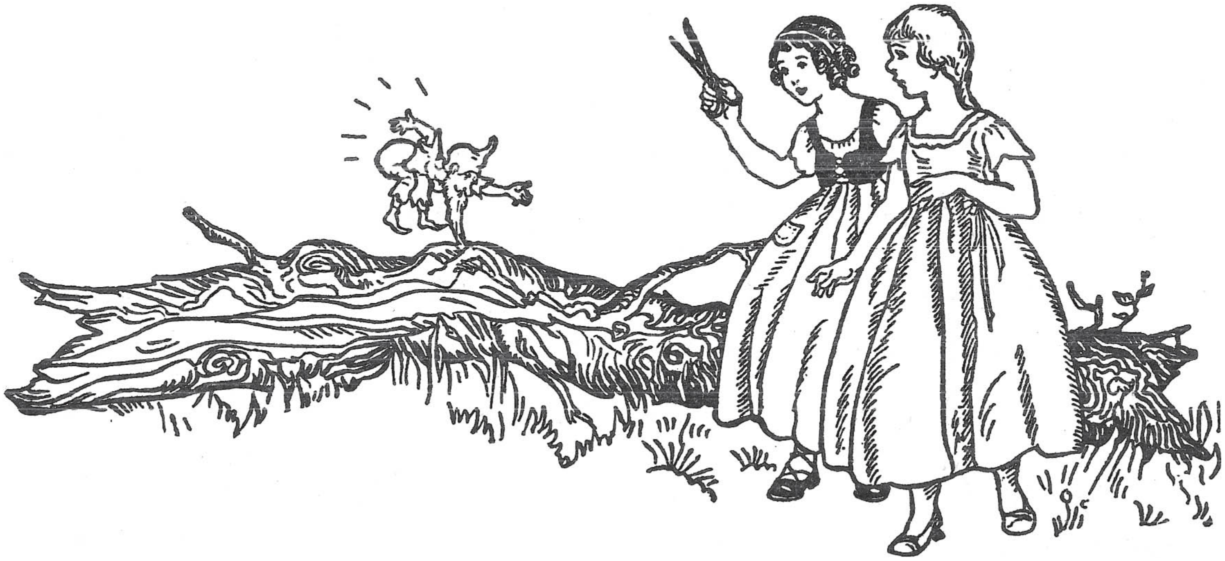
In the morning, when they all rose, the two children let him out, and he trotted away over the snow into the wood.

After that he came each evening at the same hour, laid himself on the hearth, and allowed the children to play with him just as they pleased. They became so used to his visits that no one thought of bolting the door till his black muzzle was pushed in. The winter passed, and spring was again covering the meadows and forest trees with her robe of green, when one morning the bear said to Snow-White, “I am going away now during the summer, and you will not see me again till the end of autumn.”

“Where are you going, dear bear?” asked Snow-White.

“I must go to the forest,” he replied, “to hide my treasures from those wicked dwarfs. In winter these treasures are safe under the frozen earth, but now, when the sun has warmed and softened the ground, it is easy for them to break it and dig up what I have buried, and when once anything valuable is in their hands it is not easy to recover it. They will take care that it does not see daylight again."

Snow-White felt quite sorrowful when the bear said good-by, but as he passed out of the door the latch caught his fur and tore a little piece off. Snow-White thought she saw something glittering like gold under the skin, but she was not sure, for the bear trotted away very quickly and was soon lost to sight among the trees.



Some time after this the mother sent the children into the forest to gather brushwood, and they found a large tree which had fallen to the ground. As they stood looking at it they saw something jumping up and down on the other side of the trunk, but they could not think what it was till they went nearer, and then they saw a little dwarf with a shriveled face, whose long white beard had been caught in the cleft of the tree. The dwarf was jumping about like a puppy at the end of a string, but he could not get free.

He glared at the children with his red, fiery eyes, and cried: "Why are you standing there, staring, instead of offering to assist me?"

"Poor little man," said Rose-Red, "how did you ever get caught like this?"

“You stupid goose!” he replied angrily, “I wanted to split up the tree that I might get some shavings for our cooking. A great coal fire burns up our little dinners and suppers; we don’t cram ourselves with food as your greedy people do! I drove my wedge into the tree and it seemed all right, but the horrid thing was so slippery that it sprung out again suddenly, and the tree closed so quickly that it caught my long white beard, and now holds it so fast that I cannot extricate it. See how the white milk-faced creatures laugh!” he shouted. “Oh, but you are ugly!”

Notwithstanding his spiteful words and looks, the children wished to help him, and they went up to him and tried to pull out the beard, but all to no purpose.

“I will run home and call somebody,” said Rose-Red.

“What!” snarled the dwarf, “send for more people! Why, there are two too many here already, you sheep-headed madcaps!”

“Don’t be impatient,” said Snow-White; “I think we can manage to release you.”

She took her scissors out of her pocket as she spoke and cut the dwarf’s beard off close to the trunk of the tree. No sooner was he at liberty than he caught hold of a bag full of gold which was lying among the roots, grumbling all the time about the dreadful children who had cut off his magnificent beard, a loss which nothing could repay him. He then swung the bag across his shoulders and went away without one word of thanks to the children for helping him.

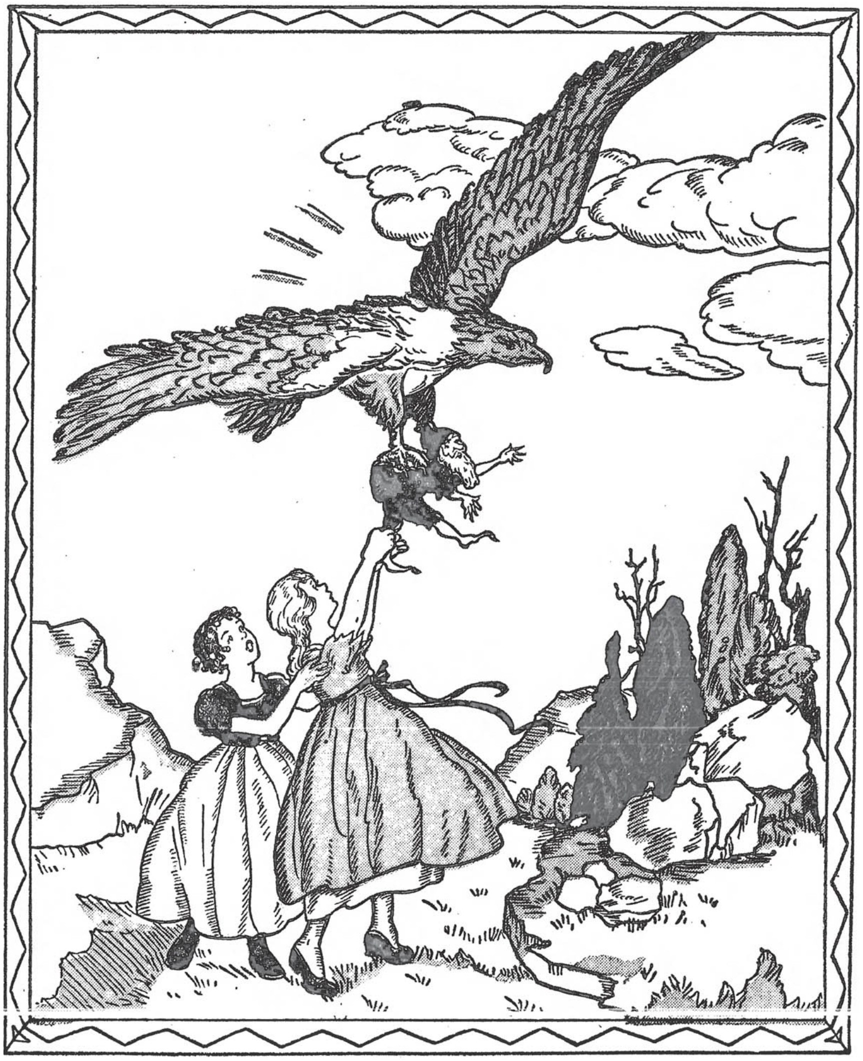
Some time after this Snow-White and Rose-Red went out one day to catch fish. As they sat fishing on the banks of the stream they saw something like a large grasshopper jumping about as if it were going to jump into the water. They ran forward and recognized the dwarf.

“What are you doing here?” asked Rose-Red. “Why do you wish to jump into the water?”

“Do you think I am such a fool as that?” he cried.

“Don’t you see how this dreadful fish is dragging me?”

The little man had been angling, but unfortunately the wind caught his beard, and entangled it in the line, so that when a large fish came up and swallowed the bait he had not strength to extricate himself, and the fish, in its efforts to escape, was dragging the dwarf into the water. He held tightly by the reeds and rushes that grew on the bank, but with very little success, and the children were only just in time to save him from being dragged in by the fish. They both pulled him back with all their might, but as long as the beard remained entangled in the line their efforts were useless, and they could not disentangle it.



The Two Children Struggled to Save the Little Man

There remained no other means of saving him than by cutting off his beard, and this time so much of it that only a short piece remained.

Although by so doing they saved his life, the dwarf was in a dreadful rage; he screamed out, “Is it your custom, you wretches, to disfigure people’s faces in this way? Not satisfied with cutting off a large piece the other day, you must now deprive me of nearly all! I dare not show myself such a fright as this. I wish you were obliged to run till you had lost the soles off your shoes!”

He lifted a bag of pearls which he had hidden among the rushes, and, throwing it on his shoulder without another word, slunk away and disappeared behind a stone.

It happened on another occasion that the mother of the two maidens sent them to the town to purchase needles, thread, and ribbon. Their way lay across a heath, on which, here and there, great rocks lay scattered. Presently they saw a large bird hovering over a certain spot on the heath, till at last he pounced down suddenly to the earth, and at the same moment they heard terrible cries and pitiful wailing close to them. The children ran to the place, and saw with great alarm that a large eagle had got their old acquaintance, the dwarf, in his talons, and was carrying him away. The good-natured children did all they could—they held the little man fast to pull him back, and struggled so fiercely with the eagle that at last the bird relinquished his prey and set him free.

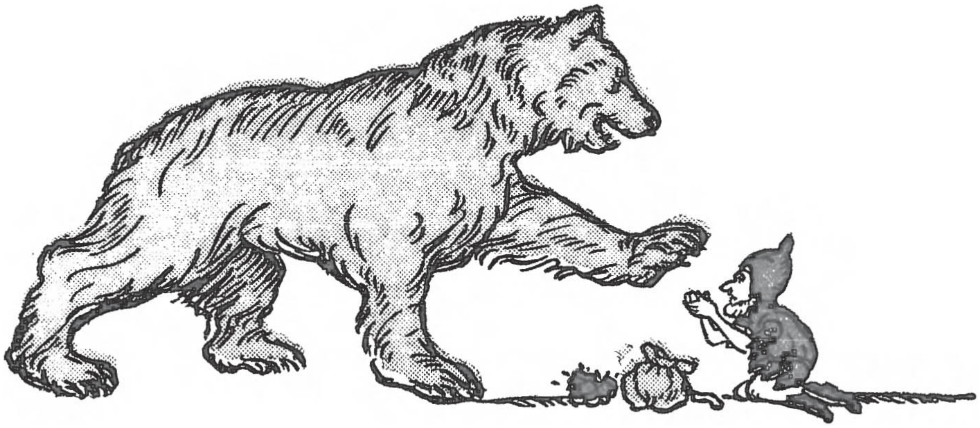
But he had no sooner recovered from his fright than the ungrateful little wretch exclaimed:

“What do you mean by catching hold of me so roughly? You clawed at my new coat till it is nearly torn off my back—awkward little clowns that you are!”

Then he took up his sack of precious stones, and slipped away among the rocks. The maidens were accustomed to his ingratitude, and did not care for it. So they went on their way to the town.

On their return, while crossing the heath, they came unexpectedly again upon the dwarf, who had emptied his sack of precious stones in a quiet corner, not supposing anyone would pass at such a late hour. The evening sun shone brightly on the glittering jewels, which sparkled and flashed out such beautiful colors in the golden light that Snow-White and Rose-Red stood and gazed in silent admiration.

“What are you standing there gaping at?” asked the dwarf, his usually gray face quite red with rage. He was going on with his spiteful words when suddenly a terrible growl was heard, and a large, black bear rushed angrily out of the thicket beside them and started toward the dwarf.



The dwarf sprang up in a great fright, but he could not escape to a place of concealment, for the bear stood just in his way. Then he cried out:

"Dear Mr. Bear, do spare my life! I will give you all my treasures, and those jewels that you can see lying there, if you will only grant me my life. Such a weak little creature as I am would scarcely be a mouthful for you. See, there are two nice little tender bits—those two wicked maidens. They are as fat as young quails. Just eat them instead of me."

But the bear paid no attention to his complaints. Without a word he lifted up his left forepaw, and with one stroke laid the ugly little wretch on the ground.

The maidens in a fright were running away; but the bear called to them:

"Snow-White, Rose-Red, don't be afraid! Wait, and I will go home with you."

They instantly recognized his voice, and stood still till he came up to them; but as he approached, what was their astonishment to see the bearskin suddenly fall off, and instead of a rough bear there stood before them a handsome young man, with beautiful, gold-embroidered clothes.

"I am a King's son," he said; "and that wicked dwarf, after robbing me of all I possessed, changed me into a bear; and I have been obliged to wander about the woods, watching my treasures, but not able to catch the dwarf and kill him till today. His death has set me free, and he has met with a well-deserved fate."

Not many years after this Snow-White was married to the Prince, and Rose-Red to his brother, with whom he had shared the riches and treasures which the dwarf had stolen and concealed in his den till the Prince recovered them at his death.

There was great joy in the village when these weddings took place, and Snow-White and Rose-Red sent for their mother, who lived happily for many years.

The two rose trees were brought to the castle and planted in the garden, and every year they bore the same beautiful red and white roses.